

messing about in **BOATS**

Volume 38 – Number 1

May 2020

Some Highlights in This Issue

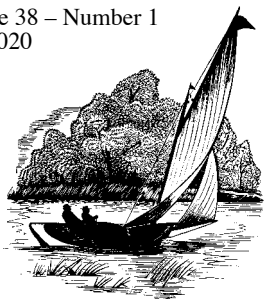
John Gardner Small Craft Workshop
Small Craft Romance
Sweet Sue – *Julia May* Goes to Sea
Remembering Robb White – The Building of Helge
Finishing the Harbinger Catboat – *River Hornet*



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Telephone is 978-774-0906

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Editor and Publisher: Bob Hicks

Magazine production: Roberta Freeman

For subscription or circulation inquiries or problems, contact:

Jane Hicks at

maib.office@gmail.com

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Commentary...

Bob Hicks, Editor

First, the big picture... As I write this on March 30 the national pandemic of corona virus has engulfed our lives, not only scaring those who fear becoming infected but penalizing those whose lives and the financial underpinnings thereof have been disrupted, diminished and too often even destroyed by the over the top reaction to it. It's pretty obvious that the "pan" part of that pandemic word derives from panic.

It's not my purpose to discuss the ramifications of all this here but I do want to make clear to all of you where we stand in it so you will know what to expect in the coming months as far as your receiving *Messing About in Boats* is concerned. When you read this a month from now, around May 1, circumstances may have changed a lot (who can predict amidst the present chaos) so take that into account. Yes, I know the magazine is but a very minor part of your lives right now but it's a major part for us so you need to know how we will be handling it.

We are carrying on with our normal everyday lives. This May issue is ready to go to the printer as soon as I get this column into place in the final layout. Our printer in an obscure small western New Hampshire town is carrying on with their work also and stands ready to print and mail it as usual.

As usual also, we will then begin putting together the June issue so as to be ready the end of April for it to go to press. Should the national catastrophe worsen by then so as to prevent it being printed and mailed we will park it until it can go forward and meanwhile get going on the July issue. Mid April we will mail out those renewal notices that have come due and trust that those of you so notified will be able to, and wish to, send on your checks to help us stay above water financially.

We are not scared by this, having lived through several such panics in our now 90

years. Childhood brought disease into our homes one after another. At my home I brought them home from my first and second grade school years for my sisters to share with me; scarlet fever, whooping cough, measles, mumps, chicken pox, all by my seventh year. Aside from smallpox having been vaccinated for we were fair game for those bugs and survived without hospital visits, with only a couple of doctor visits. These were chiefly for identifying scarlet fever, for which our home was quarantined. My father had to go live in a boardinghouse in order to be able to continue driving a milk truck, the only employment he could find at that time amidst the Great Depression (there was no unemployment for the unemployed).

When Jane and I had been married five years and had two youngsters aged three and two, the 1957 polio epidemic (so called then) swept the land in panic, a disease that had no cure at the time and left too many victims permanently paralyzed. Later on came the onset of many seasonal "flu" epidemics (later on described as pandemics). The Swine Flu of 2009 was one major panic. Through all of these our daily lives went on as usual and we survived unscathed, as did all of our extended family members.

Today, March 30, here in Essex County, Massachusetts (population 780,000) where our small town of Wenham (population 4,500) is located, the daily corona virus score sheet shows 564 known cases with two deceased. We figure those are pretty good odds to support our continuing to live our normal daily lives. Yes, we cooperate with various actions being taken to slow the spread of the corona virus, easy to do as none of them prevent us from doing what we always do. Like continuing to publish *Messing About in Boats*.

On the Cover...

A number of readers have remarked over the years about happy memories of growing up in small boats. This month reader John Robinson shares such memories with us in "Small Craft Romance, A Personal Journey of Fun and Discovery", starting on page 13. His cover photo presents visual evidence of the good times so enjoyed.



Harkening Back With Harvey

"Small craft images from today as viewed through a long ago lens."

Images by Harvey Petersiel

Goodbye Winter!





You write to us about...

Activities & Events...

Solomons Maritime Festival

The Calvert Marine Museum hosts Solomons Maritime Festival the first weekend in May in Solomons, Maryland. This year the Patuxent Small Craft Guild would specifically like to invite folks to bring any wooden canoes or small (bulkhead launchable) traditional small craft for display and on the water activities. Larger vessels are welcome but unfortunately we don't have a launch ramp on site. The nearest ramp with parking is about two miles by water from the museum. If this event looks interesting we would love to have you join us. The package the Museum will send you describes the event and contains registration details (no fees except a nominal one for dinner Saturday night if desired) or you call me anytime.

Brian Forsyth, Solomons, MD,
(443) 804-6439

Information Wanted...

Any Seamasters Around?

I loved the article about the Seamaster boat. As you said, it didn't appeal to everyone but it sure appeals to me. Do you know if there are any still around?

Bill Beardsley, snipe1905@gmail.com

Looking for Penobscot 13 and Ace 14

This response to my March Newsletter came from Chris Cunningham, the editor of *Small Boat Magazine*, the digital supplement to *WoodenBoat*:

"Hi Arch, thanks for the newsletter. It's a good reminder to get more reviews of your designs in the works. The Penobscot 13 and the Ace 14 would both be good subjects. Do you have customers who have either of those boats, have spent time with them on the water and would be willing to write a review?"

chris.cunningham@woodenboat.com
Arch Davis, Belfast, ME

This Magazine...

"Box Boats" Articles Great

Susanne Altenberger's recent series of essays on Phil Bolger's "box boats" has been great. Although disparaged by many, Phil's parallel sided, flat ply bottomed prams have put a lot of people onto the water. My own first boat, and still flagship of my fleet, is a Puddle Duck Racer, Hull #134, which is a barely disguised "racing version" of the 8'x4' Bolger Brick. I have plans for the smaller Tortoise sail and rowboat and love seeing the other permutations of Phil's imagination. I have seen a solid (not take down) version of the Shoebox pram and enjoyed the extended writeup in the February article.

Reference the Skimmer 8'x4' powerboat featured in the March 2020 issue, my

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PDR has sides that are framed in 1" cedar with 1" foam glued between, sandwiched with 2" foam sheeting and covered inside and out in thin doorskins. It has proven to be durable, strong and, if anything, overbuilt. My PDR is heavy, maybe even the "assault landing craft" of the class. As to Skimmer, it is a far more useful and capable craft and, being closer to the surface, more fun than any jet ski!

Yes, I am one person who loved the box boat series.

John Nystrom, Peru, IN

From Susanne...

Here is my official response: "That is the Spirit of Bolger, John Nystrom, as you know, actually one of a range of them from super simplified to flamboyantly elaborate. Your hands-on experience just plain getting the boat done to quickly hit the water, which is the point of doing the boat, is a good counter to the "Bolger Boxes" dismissiveness of those yacht conservatives who'll turn a simple dinghy project into a multi year building drama. Of course, if anyone wants to spend several years building a dink, we'll have a design for you as well." Good email to start the day with.

Susanne Altenburger, Phil Bolger & Friends, Gloucester, MA

...and Back from John

At my boat ramp I always get interested boaters commenting in a positive manner about my PDR. It cuts into my sailing time! I am SO looking forward to the future articles. I heard from Dave Gray of Polysail International fame that he had made a sail for a Superbrick that had been built in the Atlanta, Georgia, area. Any report on the build or performance?

John Nystrom, Peru, IN

...and Susanne Again Replies

No word in this Superbrick project yet. Folks do not always let this office know what might actually be helpful to us about matters related to our design work. Once we sell plans there is no certainty to ever find out what happened to dreams, actual building projects and finally running boats. In one of the upcoming *MAIB* issues there will be one story with a "big hole" of awareness on our end.

These are indeed private projects and folks will share what they are comfortable with. The range of project fates goes from fabulous and endlessly satisfying to indeed rather tragic, dark and life altering, all part of our live's fates outside of fooling with boats.

Thanks for the good words, John. After three "Square Boats" over the last year, there are none in the immediate future. Of course, you never know whether we might hear from the Superbrick project.

Susanne Altenburger, Phil Bolger & Friends, Gloucester, MA

Build a Boat March Credits

Looking back I realize I never provided photo credits for the pictures used in

my "Build a Boat of Your Own" article in the March issue. All were by me save for the shot of me laying sleepily in the stern which was, of course, taken by my wife Heidi, the very last photo which was taken by Dan Rodgers while we were messing about on his Diamond Lake one day, and the second to last photo showing me rowing with the sail up was by Marty Loken. Always nice to give credit where credit is due.

Looking on the Salish 100 Facebook page (signed up on Facebook just so I could check the event updates, not something I normally do) I found other cool photos of my boat shot from a bridge by Aleta Cromer Mueller. She shot high resolution photos of the whole fleet! They are amazing to look at, all kinds of boats:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/13868553@N07/albums/72157709547796106/page1>

Robert Van Putten, Loon Lake, WA



Fan Letter and Sailing Invitation

After your giving me such a glowing review of my sailing books, out of the blue I received a fan letter from David Bower, who lives in Hillsboro, Texas, telling me how much he enjoyed my book on trailer sailing and about my swallowing the anchor, and he said I could come and sail with him anytime. He was sailing at a lake just an hour's drive south of Dallas if I couldn't find anyone in the Dallas area who would take me out for a sail. His lovely letter, with photo of his boat brought tears to my eyes.

Messing About in Boats magazine is a one of a kind. You always have a wide range of interesting and widely different stories. One that I was wondering what the outcome was going to be was the British article on sailing a centerboard dinghy in bad weather near the Isle of Wight and then a capsized. We sailed down the English Channel in a seaworthy keelboat and Neptune took the opportunity to teach us newbies a lesson or two, but doing this in a dinghy with a centerboard, madness! It's a wonder that he lived to tell the tale.

Connie Benneck, Dallas TX





Two Sailing Lists

By Sam Chapin

Some People think that we should just go sailing and that this stuff is for someone else. This is my "Case for Racing:"

Races are scheduled ahead of time so our time is planned around them.

Otherwise sailing can just be put off to do other things.

The course is placed away from bad current, rocks and shallow places.

If we are in trouble someone is around to help.

It is social and others are glad to have us come.

Skill is improved by watching others sailing their boats.

New and better equipment is seen.

It's a chance to help others, important for the "inner being."

We can own the boat and be boss or crew and help him get it done.

The boat is maintained with some extra time. Boats that aren't sailed

often are found wanting when we finally try to go.

We may often sail alone just to practice our skills.

A little fleet of boats shows others a way to pleasure.

Another Sailing List while we are at it, "Boat Smart:"

Don't drink and boat. Check weather and tide before leaving the dock.

Have life jackets that fit everyone where they can be reached.

Review the boat check list before leaving the dock: Bilge, oil, gas, anchor, rode, battery, radio, spare hats, sunscreen, motion sickness stuff, exposure suits.

Remember it is always easier to fix it on shore than on the water.

Train the mate so that she or he can run the boat. Train her or him well enough so the she or he will come back and get you in case of

SOB (skipper overboard).

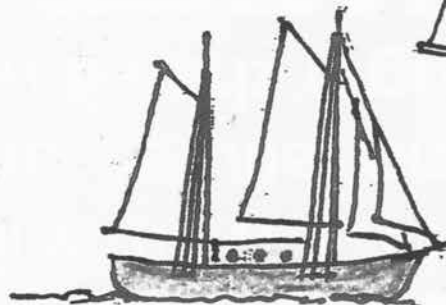
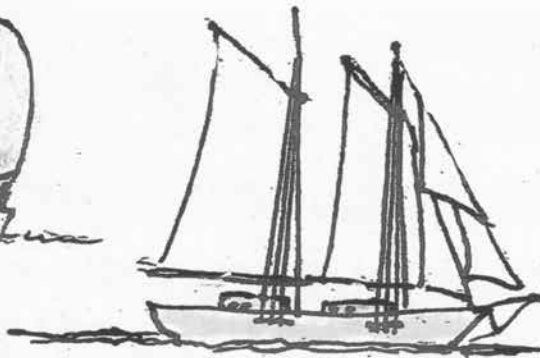
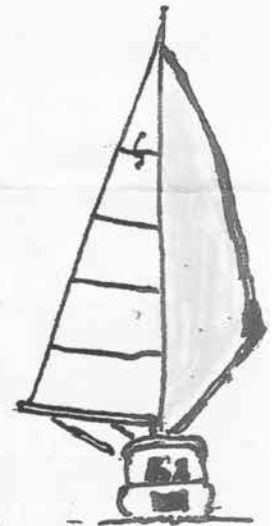
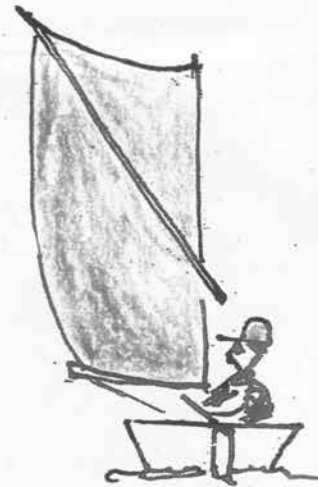
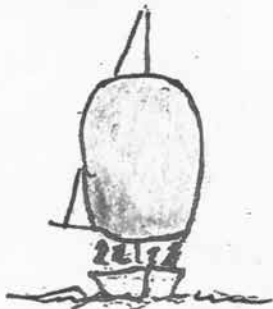
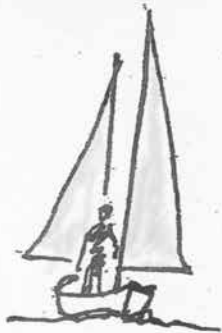
Don't boat with idiots... leave the dock before they arrive.

Obey they rules of the road. Bigger boats have the right if way.

Avoid them. Little boats are a lot of fun to look at so go slow, without a wake, while you go round them. Commercial guys are trying to make a living in a tough, tough world. Don't be one of their problems. Stay way, way out of their way.

If you start out and the weather or the seas turn bad or you find you're not ready or one of the idiots got on the boat, do a 180° turn and go home.

Stay in deep water unless you are sinking and then do the opposite.



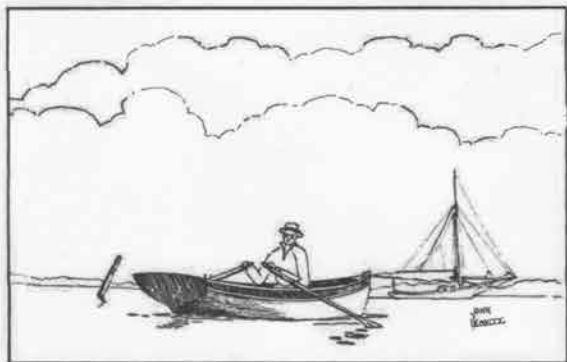
Then...1970

SMALL CRAFT CONFERENCE — ROWING WORKSHOP JUNE 6 AND 7, 1970

Sponsored by
THE SMALL CRAFT LABORATORY
of
THE MARINE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION, INCORPORATED
at
MYSTIC SEAPORT

The Original Notice in 1970

Maureen and Maribeth at the Seaport were able to find the original notice for the first Small Craft (Rowing) Workshop, complete with John Leavitt drawings. Quite a find.



INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING?

Fill out and return registration form below.

Identification badges for admission to workshop sessions and the Mystic Seaport grounds will be sent to you.

Ample accommodations available in Mystic Seaport vicinity.

Recreational rowing enthusiasts are cordially invited to participate in this informal workshop.

- Problems of pulling boat design
- Revival of recreational rowing
- Rowing demonstrations
- On-the-spot rowing competition
- Inspection and evaluation of various pulling boats gathered for the workshop: Whitehalls, Maine peapods, dories, a St. Lawrence River skiff.

* * * * *

Conferees are invited to bring their own boats for exhibition and demonstration.

* * * * *

Trailer space, launching and docking facilities provided.

ROWING WORKSHOP REGISTRATION

JUNE 6 AND 7, 1970

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

If group, how many? _____

Do you plan to bring your own boat? _____

If so, what kind? _____

What subjects would you like to discuss in the workshop sessions? _____



© 1970 Mystic Seaport Museum



Now...2020

**Welcome Participants
John Gardner Small Craft Workshop
June 26-28, 2020**

Brought to you by TSCA, WoodenBoat and Mystic Seaport Museum

Mystic Seaport Museum is partnering with WoodenBoat and Traditional Small Craft Association to host the John Gardner Small Craft Workshop as part of the WoodenBoat Show. *This year, we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the event!* Participants can both enjoy the Show and follow John Gardner's example to show that traditional small craft are a practical and economical way to enjoy the water. The Small Craft Workshop will be based on the Australia Beach where a string of floats will be provided for our use. The Workshop will include display of participant's boats, shared use of participant's boats at the discretion of the owner, demonstrations of small boat skills, morning rows on Saturday and Sunday and guided access to the Museum's boat storage area. This should be a great time to get together with like minded traditional boat folks, to share our love and knowledge of traditional small craft with others and spend some quality time with friends new and old on the beach and underway. We encourage workshop participants to volunteer to assist with one or more of these activities.

WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES

Questions, please contact Bill Rutherford at smallcrafter@gmail.com

Use of Participant's Boats:

Workshop boats will be located on the beach or the floats at Australia Beach to be available for use by others at the boat owner's discretion. Participants will need to oversee the use of their boats. To be consistent with the rules of the adjacent Boat House, the wearing of PFD's when boating is encouraged so please bring PFD's for yourself and your crew.

Mystic Seaport Museum Boat House Livery:

WoodenBoat has made the Boat House Livery available for you to try out a variety of rowing and sailing craft at no charge. The Boat House sailing and rowing rental boats will be in operation during the Workshop at no charge during the weekend so feel free to experience any or all of their beautiful collection of rowing boats. The Boat House will operate independently from the Workshop with their own rules.



John Gardner 18 June 1905—18 October 1995

"Building and using small wooden boats is part of our heritage, something worth doing that our forebears did that we can still do, something to cherish and hold on to, something to enjoy while we still have it to enjoy. What will be left for the generations to come in the uncertain future that lies ahead? We can only hope that something will remain. But here and now, let there be no hesitation in making the most of the good that has been given us" (*John Gardner, May 1995; Sharon Brown Photograph*).

HONORING JOHN GARDNER

by Sharon Brown

In April 1969 John Gardner traveled from his home in Saugus, Massachusetts eager to begin working for the Maritime Historical Association. At the Mystic station he stepped off the train in full stride, mulling over ideas for bringing traditional small craft to the forefront of maritime history and was met by Don Robinson, Associate Director for Administration, who took him to Noank to share the family Easter dinner.

It was a warm beginning to John's productive 26 year association with Mystic Seaport Museum. He was in his 64th year, a master boatbuilder at Frederick J. Dion, Inc., Yacht Yard, Salem, Massachusetts, haunting the libraries of Boston and Cambridge on his days off, maintaining significant correspondence with contemporary intellectuals and keeping up a prolific publishing output in popular boating journals and esoteric sociopolitical periodicals. He was already

well respected in the museum world as an associate and volunteer of the Peabody Museum in Salem and as a consultant to the Adirondack Museum at Blue Mountain Lake, New York when he got a call from Waldo Johnston, then Director of the M.H.A. They agreed to meet at the Parker House in Boston and John liked to tell in his wry manner how he was to "know Johnston by his necktie with whales on it." They talked all morning. According to John, Waldo got the idea that he might be available from Edmund E. Lynch who John had known in his work with the Adirondack Museum where Lynch was curator before assuming the position at the M.H.A.

John Gardner's appointment as Research Associate in the Curatorial Department was announced in the June 1969 *Log of Mystic Seaport* and also in the May 1969 issue of the *National Fisherman* where he had been Technical Editor since

1959 and writing about boats since 1951. By the time he submitted his resignation to J. Revell Carr on June 16, 1995, just shy of his 90th birthday, he had accomplished more than most people do in a lifetime. The blistering pace he established in his first year at Mystic Seaport laid the foundation necessary to achieve his vision of a small craft program which involved collection, preservation, restoration, construction, exhibition and finally, utilization.

He was given a room, Marion Dickerman's old office in Greenman House where he slept, and he scoured the grounds scrounging lumber and tools to set up "an interim boatshop" in what was then the Carriage Barn and began planning the design and construction of his first Mystic built boat, the *Lawton*. On June 6 he made a presentation to the Essex Yacht Club on ferrocement as a boatbuilding material, on July 18 he attended the 40th Annual Meeting of the M.H.A. and met with the guest speaker, Basil Greenhill, Director of England's Maritime Museum, on August 15 he presented a talk to the Noank Historical Society in which he outlined his functional approach to small craft study and his proposal for a Small Craft Laboratory and on the next day he was judging entries in the Antique Boat show at Clayton, N.Y. sponsored by the Thousand Islands Museum, in company with other judges including Howard Chapelle of the Smithsonian with whom he'd already forged a working relationship. On weekends he started traveling around New England buying up tools for the collection, scoping out lumber sources, and lining up white cedar knees for boats he was planning to build.

John Gardner published 34 articles in 1969, including three in the *Log of Mystic Seaport*. By the fall of 1970 he was a member of the Editorial Board and his total contribution of 33 articles, including 14 book reviews, written after careful deliberation and detailed scholarship in a clear, concise, informative manner are classic examples of good writing and stand the test of time.

Two items in the December 1969 *Log* reflect John's groundwork and portend exciting small craft developments for the spring of 1970 which would have far reaching implications in conveying the significant role of traditional small craft in the twentieth century maritime museum world. Curator Ed Lynch announced in passionate terms that in order to make Mystic's small craft collection more accessible to small boat builders John Gardner would direct a Small Craft Laboratory to serve as a clearinghouse for construction and design information. And the second item urged readers to watch for

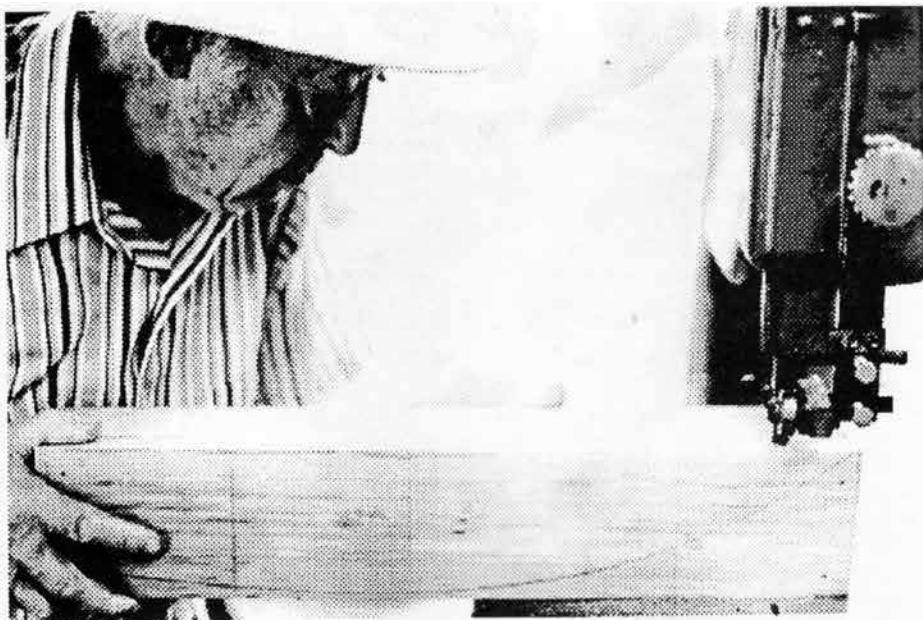
information about the M.H.A.'s plans to hold a rowing conference to reflect a revival of interest in rowing, rowboats and the important part they played in our maritime past. John took up the challenge that became the focus of the last third of his life.

Recognition of John Gardner's achievements and his value as friend and colleague were warmly acknowledged by those attending the Memorial Service in celebration of John's life held November 18, 1995 in the DuPont Preservation Shipyard at Mystic Seaport. Flanked by the 27-foot four-oared gig, *General Lafayette*, which John built in 1974-75 and Lois Darling's painting which forms the cover of John's book, *Classic Small Craft You Can Build*, Director J. Revell Carr gave the opening and closing remarks. Invited speakers who each paid unique personal tributes were Dick Wagner (Founding Director, Center For Wooden Boats, Seattle, WA), Michael K. Davis (Trustee, Floating The Apple, New York, NY), Benjamin A. G. Fuller (Former Curator of Mystic Seaport, Cushing, ME), Barry Thomas (Supervisor, Boat Shop, Mystic Seaport), Bill Mills (Carpenter Foreman, Dodson Boatyard Inc., Stonington, CT), Frank C. Durham (President, Traditional Small Craft Association, Hollis, NH), David Gilroy (Boatbuilding Instructor, Riverfront Recapture, Inc., Hartford, CT), Clark Poston (Founder, The John Gardner School of Boatbuilding, Inc., Annapolis, MD), George B. Kelley (Boatbuilder, Hyannis, MA), Sidney S. Whelan, Jr. (Trustee, Adirondack Museum, Blue Mountain Lake, NY), Benjamin B. Swan (Director, Pine Island Camp, Belgrade Lakes, ME) and Sharon Brown (Research Assistant, Supervisor, The Boathouse, Mystic Seaport).

In closing, Mystic Seaport Chanteyman, Don Sineti lead the audience in an emotional rendering of the traditional homeward bound chantey, "Rolling Home," and finally, J. Revell Carr lead a resounding three cheer salute to ring the rafters high above in salute of John Gardner, whom he called "a truly gentle man."

However, despite efforts to the contrary, no one could better express John than himself and the following, excerpted from the quotes which were read by Barry Thomas and me at the service, "John Gardner In His Own Words," will provide insight into the range of his writing and inspire rereading of his work. The source is given following each quote.

"The editor possessed one advantage over the rest of the class, or rather it was a disadvantage—he was able to censor his own write-up. For that reason he knew that if he was complimented as he deserved the rest of the class would be



At an age when most people would be content to retire to the shade with a book, John Gardner continued to work to bring traditional small craft to life for all to enjoy (Sharon Brown Photograph).

jealous. And as he did not care to allow anything concerning himself that was either mediocre or derogatory to be printed he decided that it were best perhaps, for good of all concerned, if nothing regarding himself were published" (*Washingtonia* Class Album of 1925).

"Planes are the heart of a boatbuilder's kit. Your first-class mechanic who can build a yacht inside and out and from keel to truck will often have planes enough to fill a chest all by themselves. These of various sizes, shapes and curvatures he will usually have made himself as he needed them or when nice blocks of tropical hard wood came his way. ...

There is a fascination in plane making and it is something that grows on the addict.

Seasoned live oak is a superior wood for planes and it was of this timber that the boatshop floor in the Boston Navy Yard was originally planked. Here in days past, I have been told, when the plane-making itch waxed strong, heads would be put together, and one of these oak floor planks marked for removal. An exact duplicate of some suitable but common timber like hard pine would be prepared and held in readiness. When the coast was clear the switch would be made, and forthwith an epidemic of plane making would break out in the shop. This practice never enjoyed official sanction, exactly, but became pretty well established in custom, nevertheless" (*Maine Coast Fisherman* 1952, May).

"The last campfire has burned itself down to a heap of glowing coals. Behind

the chair-circle the oaks rise to meet the chill flame of the stars—massy pillars of a deeper darkness. There is a tang of Autumn in the night air. The belated watcher draws closer the folds of his blanket, as he sits gazing on that gleaming path, which the moon has brushed across the waters of Great Pond. His thoughts go out along that path, as he thinks of the days to come and of the days that are past.

With a panoramic fullness the summer spreads itself before him, a throbbing, succession of events, kaleidoscopic, intense, poignant. He is in a canoe that rides the crested waves like a sea bird; the muscles of his back are taut; his paddle flashes as it cuts the blue water. He is couched on a bed of fragrant boughs counting the stars. The flying spray of the Atlantic is salt upon his lips. He is marching through the streets of Mercer; now threading his way through the gully; now dashing to meet an attack. The voice of a friend rings in his ears, shouting encouragement in the race that he did not win. The hand of a friend rests on his shoulder while the evening hymn is sung. He watches alone from a boat while the sun's last oriflamme unfurls itself on the Western hills. The voices of many friends are in his ears; their faces before his eyes.... And so he sits lost in deep reverie, while the moon creeps higher into the heavens, and the last flame flickering over the embers dances into oblivion" (*The Pine Needle* 1930, No. 8).

"Hauled out on the beach at Barnegat, where the lobstermen put in, lay an elegant double ender, somewhat the

worse for wear, it is true, and shabby of paint, but otherwise as trim and shapely as the day she was launched. She caught my eye from the first, and upon inquiry I learned that she had been Bill Chamberlain's own gunning dory built for winter duck hunting in the rough seas among the islands of the outer harbor. Nineteen feet, five inches over all, her rounded sides and graceful sheer made her, I thought, about the handsomest boat I had ever seen. Lightly built of cedar, she was hardly suited for the rough work of hauling lobster pots, the use to which Charlie Briggs had converted her.

As soon as work slackened enough in the shop for me to be spared for a Saturday, I took off the lines of the dory and carefully recorded the details of her construction in anticipation of the day when I should want to build another. It was a good thing I did. Too lightly constructed for lobstering and weakened by age, she went to pieces over the next few years and was broken up" (*Building Classic Small Craft* 1977, International Marine Publishing Co., Camden, ME).

"This [Maine] is a beautiful rural setting and no other place will ever seem like home to me. If tomorrow the Federal Government were to supply me with a Guaranteed Income on the order of \$5,000 annually per family, which I think is not excessive considering our present productive capacity. I should return to the home farm. I would have my garden, cow, pig, and hens. I'd cut some firewood, and would build a small power boat for fishing, depending upon fish to furnish much of the protein in our diet. I'd grow berries and flowers. And would do a little wood carving, basket making, blacksmithing, and the like, in the farm workshop. And if I felt like taking off an afternoon for reading or a day to visit the public library, it could be done. Altogether this would add up to a much fuller, freer, more independent life than I am now living.

But to think of returning to the old farm without a guaranteed income or its equivalent—God forbid! I well recall how we worked from daylight to dark, and sometimes after dark. ...

Let us not get sentimental about country living. In the 'good old days' the farmer's life was a hard one, and often a degrading one" (*Contemporary Issues* 1965, No. 51).

"... There is nothing at all left for humans to do but to relax and be waited on, and they are bored to desperation and revolt.

Such a time and condition may not be as remote as one might suppose. Already the mass of the population has ceased to

produce anything tangible, having become mere consumers of products, often inferior, which they had no part in making. Children growing up today in Suburbia, as well as in the ghetto, are being robbed of their heritage of manual skills. Many never experience the satisfactions of purposeful work and creative achievement, nor can they begin to imagine what life was like for past generations who actually, and pridefully, did things and made things for their own use with their own hands. ...

Boatbuilding is folk experience with its roots deep in man's remote past. Even as recently as the middle of the last century, the building of native small craft along our Eastern seaboard was still largely unspecialized, with fishermen and others building boats as they needed them from local materials according to methods passed down from generation to generation. They built for utility, but for beauty also, with building a distinct source of esthetic fulfillment. Building a boat in those days was also a social happening with neighbors lending assistance and stopping by now and again for a gam, to see how the job was going, to offer comment and advice, or just to share silently in the appreciation of sweet lines and work well done. The professional builder of small boats as a specialized tradesman and wage earner was a late arrival on the New England scene" (*The Log of Mystic Seaport* 1970, Summer).

"How well I remember the first boat I built—or, rather, helped my father build: a skiff to use on our river at the head of Maine's Passamaquoddy Bay. It was fashioned from cedar and oak that we had cut the winter before and had hauled over the snow to the sawmill. That was 60 years ago, and the thrill remains. Since then I have built or worked on other skiffs, as well as dories, peapods, launches, lobster boats, draggers, yachts for power and sail, on historic restorations and on reproductions. Every one of them was a deeply gratifying as well as a fascinating adventure. I am still building boats, with the same pleasure that the first one gave me" (*The Classic Boat* 1977, Time-Life Books Inc., Alexandria, VA).

"I must state categorically that there is just no such thing as the superior, all-purpose rowboat, just as there is no such animal as the superior, all-purpose dog. ...

Peapods are fine for setting lobster pots around rocky shores and ledges, guideboats for portaging through the Adirondack brush, salmon wherries for launching stern first into the surf, Whitehalls for fast taxi service across the

bay before motors came into use—but swap these functions around at your peril" (*National Fisherman* 1967, Oct; *Building Classic Small Craft* 1977, International Marine Publishing Co., Camden, ME; *National Fisherman Guide to Boats* 1993, 73 No.13).

"It is an anomaly of this present age that although we idealize youth, we do not trust it. Youth is shielded and pampered but denied responsibility and held back. Maturity is postponed.

Not only does the conventional academic routine—classes, lectures, papers, exams, credits, and so forth—tend to be removed from reality, but also its demands on students are narrow and limited, too frequently failing to tap their deeper powers or capabilities or to inspire anything approaching total commitment. Because their involvement is partial and superficial, students tend to take neither their studies nor themselves seriously. Idleness, boredom, and frustration inevitably follow, opening the door to all manner of aberrant and self-destructive impulses and influences. What passes for education, and especially higher education, turns out so often under present circumstances to be mis-education. ...

As previously demonstrated in *The Apprenticeship at Bath*, youth in our time is desperately eager for meaningful activity, starved for it, in fact. They badly need to be needed by others, and are ready to give unstintingly of themselves in direct measure to what is asked. They seek total commitment and will be satisfied with nothing less. Under favorable conditions they are self-reliant, resourceful, inventive, and learn amazingly fast. They are capable of sustained effort, eat up work, and find hard physical labor expended in a good cause satisfying both to body and spirit.

... Trust youth, give them room, permit them to develop as whole persons; ask, and set no upper limits in asking, and they will rebuild the world" (Introduction, *Barns, Beams & Boats, The Restoration Shop*, 1981, Maine Maritime Museum, Bath, ME; *Sea History* 1982, Summer).



A Message from the Organizers

Workshop Activities

Use of Participants' Boats

Small Craft Workshop boats will be located at the beach at Armstrong Workshop (former Australia Beach) to be available for use by others at the boat owner's discretion. Boats from the Mystic Seaport Museum Boathouse will also be available at no charge for participants to use.

Demonstrations and Workshops

Attendees are encouraged to help with the workshop, either by manning the booth at the beach at Armstrong Workshop for a two hour period and/or giving a demonstration of some skill such as sail rigging, sculling, boat building, hardware making, etc. If you have a skill that you would like to demonstrate at the show, please volunteer. Demonstrations should last about an hour and will be held at 11am, 1pm, and 3pm each day.

Morning Rows

At 8am on Saturday and Sunday mornings, there will be a cruise in company open to all workshop attendees. We will gather at the beach at 8am and cruise either upriver past the highway bridge to the beautiful salt marshes or downriver past the Museum Village with classic yachts on their moorings.

Chapter Challenges

We thought we might create some chapter challenges to be held during the event. Recognition for those who made the first (there are still a few active), rowing races, fastest boat, oldest boat, newest boat, chanty singing, tallest tales, farthest traveled and anything else that involves group fun. Watch for developments.

Livery Boats Available for Free

Livery boat types expected to be available are a most diverse group of oar and sail boats including Whitehall, Peapod, Beetle Cat, Woods Hole Spritsail, Riverside Dinghy, Seaford Skiff, Flat Bottomed skiff and in fresh livery this year, a Culler Good Little Skiff. The *WoodenBoat* funded rentals are very popular during *WoodenBoat* Show weekends.



Small Craft Workshop Overview

June 26 - June 28

The John Gardner Small Craft Workshop will again be held during the *WoodenBoat* Show, hosted by the Traditional Small Craft Association's John Gardner Chapter. In addition to having a booth to acquaint show attendees with the TSCA, there will also be demonstrations of skills that enhance the traditional small boat experience. Mystic Seaport Museum Boathouse craft will also be available at no charge for participants to use. We are hoping for a continuous backdrop to the show of traditional small craft in action on the river.

All TSCA members are encouraged to attend with or without their own boats. There is plenty to do if you don't bring your own vessel. Launching and parking details will be posted with registration materials.

Workshop participants can register to stay onboard the full rigged *Joseph Conrad* on Friday and Saturday nights.

Registration for the Small Craft Workshop also allows you admission to the *WoodenBoat* Show all three days at no additional cost.

This year's John Gardner Small Craft Workshop will be a special event as we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of John Gardner convening the first Small Craft Conference - Rowing Workshop. That event in 1970 was a gathering of academics and boat builders which has since grown to include the coming together of small craft people and their boats, whether of traditional cedar on steam bent frame or some other modern material, usually powered by oar and sail, bound together by a common enthusiasm for naturally evolved shapes that so well fit the boundary of the sea, lakes and rivers and our sometimes sandy, sometimes rocky shores.

We plan to celebrate folks who attended in the past as well as their original or replica craft. Welcome also are present creations crewed by folks skilled in using modern miracle materials. And bring your latest solar powered, autonomous sailers and 3-D printed craft because efficient, small displacement hulls may be our recreational and work small craft of the future.

This latest is being written during the March Equinox in a time of great uncertainty. We caution that scheduling for an event in early summer is problematic at best. Before casting off, make sure to take all reasonable personal precautions and check the Mystic Seaport Museum website to confirm that the event is being held. The good thing about anniversaries is that they come around yearly, so, if necessary, we will celebrate at another time. In the meantime, let's get out there and practice "social distancing" on the water. Fair Winds.

Bill Rutherford and Crew at John Gardner TSCA

What You Need to Know

For information on registration please call (860) 572-5331. For information on logistics please email shanon.mckenzie@mysticseaport.org. For information on the program please email Bill Rutherford, smallcrafter@gmail.com

Rowing to the Event 1970

This is Steve Jones, I plan to recreate the voyage with Zell upriver of the event's first year in a replica of the boat we used in 1970. We are working on the boat. Flat Hammock Press will be reprinting the chapter from *Backwaters* which gives one version of that event. There will also be some updates. The publication will be available at the site with proceeds to John Gardner Chapter TSCA.

(Steve has offered his downriver boatyard as a stop for the Sunday morning Row)

Remembering John Gardner

I just received the latest *MAIB* and was pleased to see an article by John Gardner, a hero of mine and many others. When the kids and I were building Banks dories at Triton High School in 1974 to 1978, I looked forward to his articles in the *National Fisherman*. I used to visit local boat shops with my three or four students per year, an after school class. In about 1975 I wrote a letter to Gardner in Mystic after admiring one article in his *Dory Book* that my kids had given me for Christmas. In it I asked if we could visit. I never thought I'd receive an answer from the famous man.

A couple of weeks later I got a reply saying the equivalent of, "Come on down with the lads." My words, not his. Four of us piled in to my car one Saturday and drove the long trip to Mystic. We arrived about 10am and were warmly greeted by him in his shop where he and helpers were building whaleboats (not the modern motorized kind) at the time. Then, to my surprise, he didn't leave us on our own to explore Mystic Seaport Museum. He invited us to follow him around to storage places to see his projects, pieces of old boats he was studying and some he was planning to restore or build replicas of. The kind teacher historian spent well over two hours with we strangers. Thanks for reprinting his article.

Pike Messenger, Middleton, MA



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Small boats, especially the human propelled variety, have been a passion of mine for my whole life. I'm not sure when my first experience with a small boat occurred but I guarantee you I was little, too little to remember, no doubt too young to even crawl. It was probably when my dad took me for a ride in the brown canvas canoe he built himself when he was 15. I bet I liked it. I bet I felt at home, comfortable with the movement of the boat, the feel of it, maybe like the womb had felt. I bet I was quiet, pensive.

Yes, right from the start I was around boats, especially at my family's ancestral home in the tidewater of Middlesex County, Virginia. Besides the canvas canoe, very early on in my burgeoning existence there was the *Miss Lynn*, a wooden, flat bottomed skiff built down the county in Deltaville and named after my big sister. I loved the *Miss Lynn*. We kids would pole that heavy skiff around the shoreline of Locklies Creek using a big spruce oar or the handle of a crab net, exploring, poking around in the mud or maybe even actually catching crabs.



Some kids in the *Miss Lynn*.

Driven by unending curiosity and skinny arms we loved to make our way up to the very end of the creek in the *Miss Lynn* where the old wooden deadrise workboats were taken when their useful lives were expired. Their owners would tow them up as far as they could on a flood tide and abandon them where the creek petered out in thick salt marsh and mud. This played out exceedingly well for us kids who loved to clamber over the otherwise forgotten old hulks, prying off the occasional galvanized cleat or some other treasure.

My cousin Stephen's family also had an ancestral place in Middlesex and they too had a locally built skiff. In that craft, whose design bespoke of utilitarian simple elegance, Stephen and I, as seven to twelve-year-olds, explored extensively the various arms of Meachum Creek and the undulating Rappahanock shoreline around his family's cabin. The especially notable thing about Stephen's skiff was that it was powered by a 3½ horsepower Evinrude outboard and the motor added quite another dimension to our small crafting. Part of such adventures, of course, involved dealing with the outboard itself, fueling it, starting it and otherwise trying to keep the thing running. That motor, like others in a long succession after it, turned out to be an excellent learning tool.

Along the way my family got an outboard motor for the *Miss Lynn*, too, a six horsepower, green and white Johnson Seahorse and, boy, did that increase the scope of us kids' voyaging. Pirate's Island, the fish oil factory and Bush Park Creek among other destinations were then within easy range. Easy, that is, when the outboard continued to cooperate.

Small Craft Romance A Personal Journey of Fun and Discovery

By John Robinson

In 1966, when I was eight, my dad and I commenced building a 10' three point hydroplane speedboat. There had been other wooden boat building projects in our family before but the hydroplane one in particular gathered enough momentum to be successfully carried to completion and made a splash in more ways than one. It took us all winter and most of the next spring to finish it and the day we launched that boat is strong in my memory. The six horse Johnson, commandeered from the *Miss Lynn*, pushed it along at exhilarating speeds and much fun was had with the little hydroplane in the few years of its usable rough and tumble lifespan.



My sister Ginny and I in the hydroplane.

As much as I loved motorized small boating, the human propelled kind remained especially dear to me, and besides the old rowing skiffs there have always been canoes in my life, a long succession of them after the old brown canvas one. We typically owned several canoes at a time and with them my family explored waterways in Tidewater Virginia as well as free running whitewater rivers near home in Roanoke. We even surfed them and practically destroyed one in the unforgiving surf of the Atlantic. Paddling canoes would prove to be a long running constant in my life.



The old aluminum canoe.

At age 12 I built my first kayak from a kit I ordered from an outfit called Dedham Kayaks in Massachusetts. I had been eyeing pictures and descriptions of kayaks, and not just Inuit versions, in various magazines and to say that I was intrigued with them would be much of an understatement. I had not even

seen a kayak in real life until I unboxed that fiberglass kit which consisted of a molded fiberglass hull, deck and cockpit rim and seat. I learned a lot about fiberglass work on that project and my dad refrained from helping me with building it for expressly that reason, I'm sure.

The final result was more than a bit rough but I had a lot of fun with that kayak after, that is, I finally learned to paddle it on a straight course. My good friend Rocky built a kit kayak shortly after I built mine and through our high school years we used them often, including on some overnight river camping trips which are, of course, stories in themselves.



Rocky and I in kayaks on Roanoke River, 1976.

Fascinated by the speed I could get out of my little kayak compared to the other human powered boats with which I was familiar, canoes and rowboats, I bought a second one when I was 15. That kayak came ready built of fiberglass by the Phoenix Company. The Isere was several feet longer and skinnier than my Dedham kit kayak and had less "rocker" to its keel. It therefore tracked straighter and was considerably faster and that made it especially fun to paddle.



Me in the Isere kayak.

Not long after that I acquired an even faster kayak, a Phoenix Match II, which was designed for downriver racing. Additional speed capability came with the disadvantage of it being very tippy and otherwise much less user friendly than my other kayaks. Yes, I was learning well the concept that all vessel designs are combinations and compromises of particular characteristics.

Along the crooked road of my small craft romance my dad built a rowing rig for one of our beat up aluminum canoes, he knew well my fascination with such things and I think he wanted to keep my curiosity fed. He attached wooden outriggers extending from the canoe's gunwales, placing the oarlocks outboard far enough to effect an efficient stroke with common 7' oars. It was aboard that canoe cum rowboat that the rowing interest hook was firmly set. I learned to row that canoe well and, although I could sprint faster in my kayaks, it was hard to beat rowing even in that clunky canoe for speed over an extended course.



My dad rowing the aluminum canoe.

In my late teens I was still paddling canoes and kayaks, of course, but I was becoming more and more enamored with the subject of rowing in general, competitive rowing in particular. I mean, the sight of those skinny sculls and sweep oared rowing shells was most fascinating. There were no competitive rowing programs anywhere near where I lived, but that didn't dampen my enthusiasm for learning more about it.

I entered Roanoke College and in so doing continued my status of being in a desert of competitive rowing, the closest program being a three-hour drive away at the time, but nevertheless my small boat journey continued. Early in my college career I acquired a well used Alden Martin Trainer rowing scull complete with a drop-in sliding seat rig and 9'6" spruce sculls. With that boat I plunged further into the ethereal and complex world of sliding seat rowing, a different universe altogether, and man was it fun. I studied all of the literature I could find on the subject and I joined the National Association of Amateur Oarsmen, later known as the United States Rowing Association.



The Alden Martin Trainer and kayak.

During college I dated a girl from Philadelphia whose parents were highly experienced competitive scullers. So, yes, on visits to Philly I got to row a double scull with her dad on the Schuylkill River. That was pretty heady stuff for me. I even started collecting prints of rowing paintings by the famed 19th century Philadelphia artist Thomas Eakins.

By the time I entered dental school at VCU in Richmond I had also tried rowing

a genuine single racing scull, much narrower and quite skittish compared to my old trainer. It was on a brief visit to the University of Virginia boathouse on Charlottesville's Rivanna reservoir that I promptly flipped the beautiful scull, dumping myself unceremoniously into the chilly November water. But that cold experience nevertheless lit a fire within me. I became determined not only to find a racing single scull of my own but to learn to row it well.

In those pre internet days such a search was rather challenging but fun, exciting and ultimately satisfying. I finally located a used racing single for sale up 195 in Washington, DC. The seller met me at Potomac Boat Club, a wad of cash changed hands and I became the proud and excited owner of a 1977 Van Dusen Midweight single scull. The somewhat beat-up boat had a racing legacy. In fact, it was raced by Gregg Stone in the World Championships in Amsterdam in 1978.



Rowing the Van Dusen Midweight single scull in 1982

Driving away with that boat on the roof on a rack cobbled together of warped 2"x4"s that the seller had thrown in with the deal, I dreamed of all the greatness to come in adventures with that scull. In the following months I rebuilt the Van Dusen, becoming in the process even more knowledgeable about fiberglass repairs and epoxy paint. I replaced various parts and fittings on the boat and in so doing I dove ever deeper into the subculture of sliding seat sculling.

During my four years at VCU there was no organized rowing on the James River, the long established rowing scene there dating from the 1870s having taken a hiatus. Just as well, I guess. Otherwise I might not have graduated from dental school if rowing had been that much more distracting.

During my time in Richmond I fell in with an upper classman who also rowed a Van Dusen single scull. With Pat I had many a satisfying rowing session and we even raced in regattas on the Potomac, the Schuylkill and the Kanawa Rivers as representatives of VCU Crew. That's what we told the race organizers anyway. We didn't tell them that we two were the entire VCU crew at the time.



The Van Dusen single scull dwarfing our Chevette.

My time at dental school came and went. My wife and I moved back to my hometown of Roanoke and I continued to row the Van

Dusen on the local reservoir. However, the complexities of rowing a racing single scull and the lack of even one other rower in the whole valley led to a gradual fade of interest in that pursuit. Besides, other big things were happening in my life and before long the Van Dusen was relinquished to another home.

Our sons began arriving and I acquired another wonderful boat, a used 1982 Wenonah Jensen 18 canoe. I told you that canoes have been a constant in my life, remember? Made for cruising flat water, the Jensen was a joy to paddle and Marybeth and I had many an excursion in it. It was the boat in which our sons first rode and we often had paddling picnics on local waters. We enjoyed that robin's egg blue canoe for many years before passing it on to a local charity. Not without a canoe for long, we bought a brand new Kevlar Jensen 18 before the year was out.



Marybeth and Adam with the Wenonah.

Had I lost interest in kayaks? No, of course not. In 1987, about the time that I parted with the Van Dusen racing scull, I bought my first sea kayak, a 19'x 22" wide Seda Glider. That had to be one of the sweetest kayaks ever built. Fast and comfortable and roomy enough to carry plenty of gear for overnight trips, it was kitted out with a foot-operated rudder. I took many wonderful and/or miserable trips in that kayak, exploring Virginia's Eastern Shore and even crossing

the widest part of the Chesapeake Bay in it on a long overnight push accompanied by my cheerful brother-in-law Frank.



Son Adam and I in the kayak.

In the early '90s I discovered the existence of surf skis, a sleek and sexy form of sit on top kayak, and I decided that I had to know more, had to paddle one for myself. From an outfit called Venturesport in Florida, I acquired a Shearwater surf ski and my adventures with that boat began. It was a blast to paddle, of course, very fast and tippy, but the fact that it was a wet boat was a distinct disadvantage for me. It was impossible to keep dry while paddling it. I was perpetually sitting in a pool of cold water and that meant it would become low in the hierarchy of my small boats. I eventually gave it to a friend who lives by and plays in the warm waters of Florida who assured me he would give it a good home and lots of use.

When paddleboards came onto the scene I thought, "hmm that looks silly." I was firmly gripped with that sentiment for quite some time until my curiosity finally caught up with me. I had to try it for myself. I got

the chance, with son Adam on a visit to North Carolina's Outer Banks. I was not overly impressed at first but I soon began to see that it "had possibilities." And lately, sitting in a kayak for any length of time had become somewhat uncomfortable.

Sufficiently captivated, I ordered a 9'10" Tower paddleboard from California and thus began my sojourn into the subculture of paddleboarding. The Tower is fiberglass and designed and built like a surfboard, it's a surf oriented, wave riding design. We've had fun paddling it on flat water as well as surfing with it on trips to the Atlantic coast.



Getting ready to paddle boards with Rob, 2019.

Soon I realized that one can't own just one paddleboard, so we added another one, a Surftech B1, to the collection and then another after that since everyone wanted to

paddle. More and more I came to appreciate fully the merits, the fun, of paddleboarding. My attraction to the free, unencumbered feeling of the stroke and how it engages the entire body, the vantage point over the water and the light weight and simplicity of the board itself just grows stronger all the time.

Paddleboarding has since become my current favorite form of human powered small crafting. We've added and subtracted from our board collection and these days I enjoy the 14' displacement board the most but the inflatable Badfish board, made specifically for surfing standing river waves but good for all sorts of rocky river paddling, is great fun too. I'm paddling a board at least twice per week almost year round.

Recently, on another front, there's been a push by an energetic group in my community to start a rowing club. A shell friendly, low profile floating dock has been acquired and installed at nearby Carvins Cove reservoir where I rowed solo all those years ago and more interest is blossoming all the time. I have not rowed in years but I'm very much looking forward to seeing the local rowing scene finally develop and grow.

Hmm, maybe I'll take up rowing again myself. And I might need to try outrigger canoe paddling. And then there are the versatile new hybrid surf ski designs. Whatever I might get into or return to in the way of human powered boating I reckon my small craft romance will continue in some form even if I can't fully participate until the day I die.

Maybe, just maybe, you can relate.



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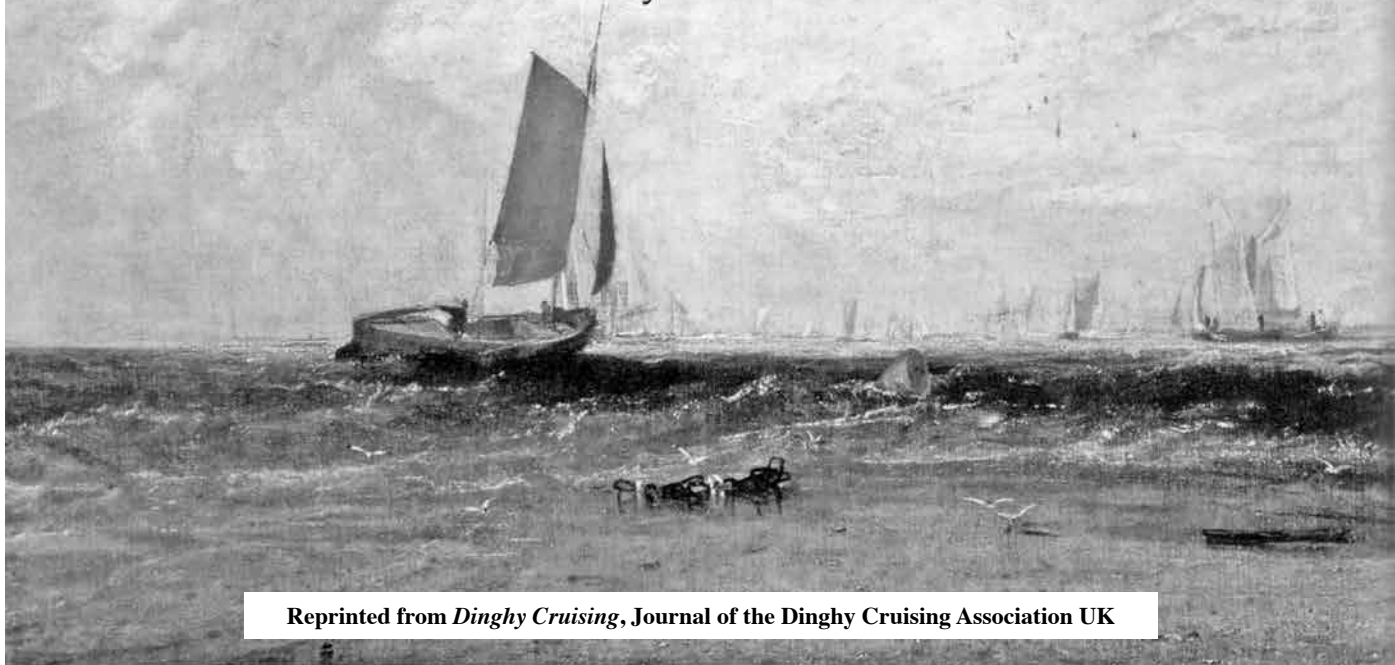
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Sweet Sue

Being an account of the divers perils and adventures that beset the crew of a Thames skiff on a voyage from London to Ostend, as recalled by Patrick Arnold



Reprinted from *Dinghy Cruising*, Journal of the Dinghy Cruising Association UK

Joseph Mallord William Turner: 'Fishing upon the Blythe-Sand, Tide Setting In', exhibited in 1809

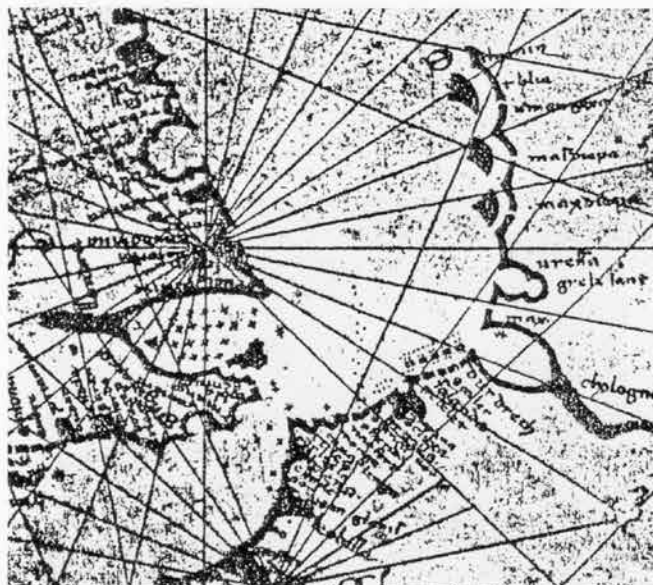
The little self-published paperback arrived with a two-sentence letter: 'Dear Keith, Please find enclosed a memorial to a moment of madness. *Susannah* now lies in the Tithe Barn Museum in Upminster. Best wishes, Patrick.'

Patrick being DCA member 3339, Patrick Arnold.

The book is not merely an account of the 'moment of madness', though that alone would have been worth printing. It is a paean of praise for the London River, too, as it once was and is no longer. More, it is an admiring salute to the mediaeval cartographers and navigators, especially the Venetian Andrea Bianco, who published a pre-Columbian world map. Finally, it is testimony to his belief in simple equipment, especially aids to navigation, and his readiness to use them — all he took with him was a copy of part of a Bianco chart that showed the English Channel and a magnetised sewing needle on a cork floating in a bowl of water for a compass. He slept wrapped in his jellaba.

Susannah (see next page) was moulded in GRP on the lines of a traditional Thames Skiff. Length: 14ft; beam at rowlocks: 4ft 1ins; unballasted weight ± 120 lbs. Speed at 16 strokes per minute, 2.5 knots.

Patrick's account of his adventure is also beautifully written: I hope you enjoy it as much as I did. Published in two parts, Part I, in this issue, covers his first three days afloat; Part II will cover the last three—Ed



(Above) Andrea Bianco's coverage of the English Channel and the facing European coast. The original would have been richly coloured

Day One — Sunday 3rd June, 1979

Susannah, my fourteen-foot skiff, lay gently tugging at her mooring ropes alongside the big black landing stage at St Katherine's dock. It was high water and the moment of truth was upon me.

Peter Hobart had come with a small bottle of brandy which he gave to me, saying that it would keep me company. Michael, who had shared the same tyrannical school masters with me, had come with his wife Anne and their two daughters, Tracy and Nicki. Jack was a friend of Michael's and, as he had only been told of my plans that morning, he wore the uneasy smile of a sane man who finds himself in the company of lunatics. Many days later, I was told that Alex Baker had come to see me off but arrived after my departure.

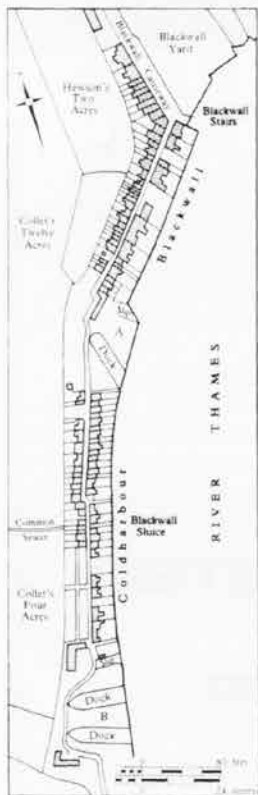
At 8 o'clock (GMT), the bell on the roof of the warehouse at St Katherine's sounded the hour and my voyage began.

It was an ancient custom that one should pay the daughters of Aegir for a safe voyage and as I needed all the help I could get, I willingly tossed my penny into the murky water.

With the good wishes of my friends in my ears, I pulled away from the landing stage and moved out towards midstream to gain the benefit of the ebbing tide.

The day was bright but overcast with a light wind from the North East. The old warehouses and derelict jetties of the Lower Pool passed by in what seemed to be a never-ending memorial to a once-great port. I found the silence, broken only by the splash of my oar blades, very depressing until somewhere about Ratcliff, a window was thrown open and a complete stranger waved and clapped his hands. I assumed that he must have heard of my venture from the local radio and was showing his support for my voyage. Anyway, I waved back and continued on my way.

Turning into Greenwich Reach, I looked over my shoulder and saw the Royal Observatory, surmounted by the red time signal on Greenwich Hill. Upon the waters of Greenwich Reach, there appeared several boats being rowed by members of the local rowing club. There is something very graceful about a well-crewed rowing eight and when one swept past me, the oars rising and falling like the smooth powerful wing beats of a flying swan, I felt my efforts



Old Blackwall and Coldharbour, c.1740



St Katharine's Docks in 1979, when it housed the old Nore Lightship (LV86) for a while. One of the Maritime Trust's collection of historic ships, now dispersed
© M J Richardson

to be extremely clumsy. I did my best to tidy up my style of rowing and whilst engaged upon this worthy task, I crossed the Prime Meridian and entered the Eastern hemisphere by way of Blackwall Reach. It was here the famous 'Blackwall frigates' were built. The first, *Seringapatam* was launched in 1837 and weighed 818 tons. Why this ship was named after a town in India, I did not know and I resolved to find out one day. The river flowed onward past all this history and my oars rising and falling carried me well into Bugsby's Reach before I remembered that very expensive device that so many have hailed as the eighth wonder of the world.

I must admit that I doubt its value; nevertheless, in due course, I passed through the civil engineering works of the new Thames Barrier and, as I passed, I watched a floating crane being manoeuvred alongside one of the coffer dams from which was emerging the gleaming alloy roof of one of the piers.

Two hours after starting, I was just off Beckton outfall. The light northeasterly breeze had fallen to a dead calm and the air was laden with the distinctive aroma of one of London's biggest sewerage discharge points. It seemed incongruous, but here of all places I heard the first call of a cuckoo; summer had come to me and Beckton. Within minutes, I crossed the brown swirl of the tidal flow from Barking creek and cast a thought of the abbey and village

The Thames Barrier, completed in 1982, three years after Patrick passed it





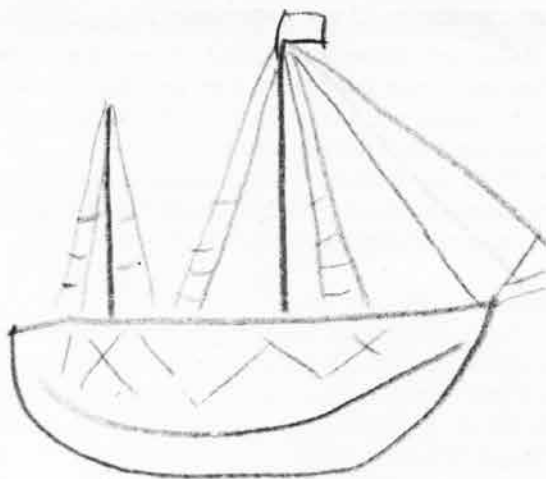
Rainham Church of St Helen and St Giles, built c.1178 by Richard de Lucy

that once sheltered William of Normandy. I don't think he or his contemporaries would know the place now. The abbey has gone and the village is a sprawling town uneasily wedded to London.

The men working on the jetty of Barking power station waved as I passed by. Now, the buildings were becoming rarer and the river passed between banks that grew trees rather than pylons.

On the north bank of Halfway Reach stands the vast car plant of Ford's, built upon the site of the infamous Dagenham Breach which two centuries ago had caused an epic struggle between an engineer called Captain Perry and the land-hungry waters of the Thames. On this Sunday afternoon, all was quiet and peaceful with a dribble of smoke curling upward to fade away into nothingness.

Three hours after the commencement of my voyage, I let go anchor in the mouth of Rainham Creek. In Rainham Church, there is scratched on a wall the sketch of a 14th century ship. I like to think the sketch was scratched by a Rainham man who had seen the first of the Italian wool ships. This ship was far greater than anything the Rainham man had seen before and he probably used his knife point to illustrate to his audience the general layout of this extraordinary vessel which then lay aground by the entrance to the creek.



Patrick's sketch of the graffito on the wall of Rainham Church

As I lay at anchor, I sadly noted that, as part of the Thames Barrier scheme, Rainham Creek was being dammed and that *Susannah* would be the last boat to leave this one-time busy little backwater for a foreign port; and leave she did, after I had had a little rest and a lot of chocolate.

The sky was still overcast and visibility was down to about three miles, the wind had backed to the North but remained very light, the sea defences of Wennington marsh seemed endless. The sea wall and salting being the silent and only witnesses of my labours.

At last, I came up to the light beacon at Coldharbour Point and entered Erith Rands and over my shoulder the low hill of Purfleet shrouded in trees appeared. At the same time, the sounds of musketry could be heard from the army ranges on Averly marshes. The crackle of rifle fire accompanied me to the mouth of the Mar Dyke.

Close to the Mar Dyke, stands The 'Royal Hotel' and I reached the landing steps of that establishment just as the tide turned and began to flood. I was thankful to let go anchor just clear of some anglers, whose activities I watched with idle curiosity as the flooding tide remorselessly reduced the sandy beach from which they cast their lines. The catches seemed limited to a pitiful number of small eels and even smaller flounders. For an hour and a half, I lay sprawled on the floor boards. Then to pass the time, I chewed some muesli followed by a few dates but in the end, my inactivity gave way to an irrepressible urge to go on.

I weighed anchor at a quarter-past three and by sneaking along close to the shore I made good progress against the flood tide, nobly assisted by a steady westerly breeze. I passed Thurrock Yacht Club at half-past five and the wind had strengthened to the point where my stem was being swung by its force. It wasn't long before I grew frustrated by the continual effort to bring the stem back



Italian merchant ship of the 1400s

in line, so I ran aground on a small beach close by a jetty which served a large group of silos and from the beach I took about twenty pounds of pea shingle. The shingle loaded into some plastic bags was packed into the stern to act as ballast.

In ten minutes, I was on my way again down Fiddler's Reach towards Grays pleased to find that the ballasting was a success. By hugging the shoreline, I made good time to the town of Grays and there I picked my way through a cluster of old ships forlornly awaiting their turn at the breaker's yard.

I took about an hour to row from Thurrock via Grays to the ferry at Tilbury. Numerous notice boards are fixed to the side of the ferry landing stage. The notice boards state that every known punishment between a crippling fine to penal servitude in Van Dieman's Land would be allotted to those who moored boats there. I moored *Susannah* in that forbidden place trusting that she would not be singled out from all the other small boats that laid there.



Tilbury Ferry and power station

In my youth, I remember Tilbury ferry as one of the principal crossing places for traffic between Kent and Essex. There was always a long and noisy queue of vehicles waiting to load and cross the Thames. However, the opening of the Dartford tunnel has changed all that. The big ferry boats are now gone having being replaced by two small vessels that carry the few foot passengers between Tilbury and Gravesend.

I wandered ashore and found myself in the saloon bar of a public house known as The Worlds End. After a couple of drinks, I wandered back along the sea wall and considered the grey river and the grey surroundings and thought that the man who named the pub must have a cynical but accurate sense of humour.



The Tilbury Ferry
c.1640

When I reached *Susannah*, my mind was engaged upon the problem of where to stay for the night. I set off again dodging round an incoming ferry boat, sliding by a tug, and avoiding a large buoy to cross the river to the South or Kentish shore. There was an hour of daylight left and the problem of where to spend the night was unresolved, and not being able to resolve it, I kept rowing.



Shornemead Fort

The street lights in Gravesend were shining brightly as I came level with the dark mass of an old fortification known as Shornemead Battery. Somewhere out in the river, a bell buoy clanged when an occasional swell swayed it enough to activate the clappers. The wind had died away to a dead calm and a mist hung thick over the water. The tide had started to ebb and it seemed a shame not to use it, so, by using the flashing light of a small lighthouse built on the shore as a stern mark, and by keeping the seawall as a dark blur on the starboard hand, I rowed onward for another hour. By the end of that hour, two new navigation aids were taken to guide me : one was the orange flame that flared from the oil refinery on Corringham marshes; the second was the lowing of a cow somewhere on Cliffe marshes. Neither of these navigational aids will be found in the Admiralty Pilot but as navigational aids they served me well.

I rowed on until suddenly my oars began to strike the bottom. Turning with the intention of seeking deeper water, I went aground on a ridge of sand. It was there that the ebbing tide left me high and dry, and all the inner debate and indecision on where to stay for the night was irrevocably resolved for me.

I cast my anchor, fumbled in the dark for some chocolate, wrapped my jellaba about me and went to sleep somewhere in the mist on Blyth Sands.

Day Two — Monday 4th June, 1979

The night had been a cold one and I was awake when the first light of dawn touched the eastern horizon. I sorted through various plastic bags and prepared a breakfast of muesli, dates and water. While I shivered through breakfast, the flooding tide crept over the sand to reach me a few minutes after 3 o'clock. I packed away the bags of foodstuff, rolled up my mattress and prepared for the day's adventures. It was about half-past

three when *Susannah* floated and I started to row. The morning had started clear but a light easterly breeze had carried with it a thick mist which blotted out the lights of the Corringham refinery.

I crossed Blyth Sands by hugging the tide line formed by the water lapping on the sands. The thick mist made it impossible to fix my position but at high water or thereabouts, I went ashore on a shell beach which was backed by a wide salting. The salting faded into the mist but there seemed to be a bay to the east of my landing. I can only assume from later study of charts that my landing place was on St Mary's Marsh.

When the tide started to ebb, the wind fell to a dead calm. It was a beautiful day for rowing and I moved out into the deep water of the estuary. The ebb carried me along and a few minutes before 8 o'clock I came to the buoy known as the West Nore Sand. Visibility began to improve and the thick mist was replaced with a thin one, I could just see the Kentish shore about a mile away.

She came into view long after I had heard her engines. She was a cargo ship and she rapidly overhauled me. In moments like this, there is a tightening of gut muscles because this mountain of steel, pushing a creamy bow wave before her, could end my adventures without a tremor. The monotonous thump of her engines brought the *La Bahia of London* rushing down upon me. I watched her carefully and decided to pull away and so place myself on her port side. Whilst I was in the process of executing my decision, the thump of her engines died away and out on the wing of the bridge came the Ship's Officers. The *La Bahia*, built in Norway in 1972, is about 330 feet long, displaces about 8,000 tons and is registered as a tanker. She is small in the world of tankers, but to me she



was enormous. The officer of the watch, armed with a loud hailer, courteously asked if I needed any assistance, an offer I refused by a palm-down sweep. I wish I could have been more polite, but I don't think one can hold a polite conversation by shouting. Once she was clear of me, the telegraph clanged and the *La Bahia* went on her way as if nothing had happened. Nevertheless, it was a fine gesture by the master, which I appreciated.

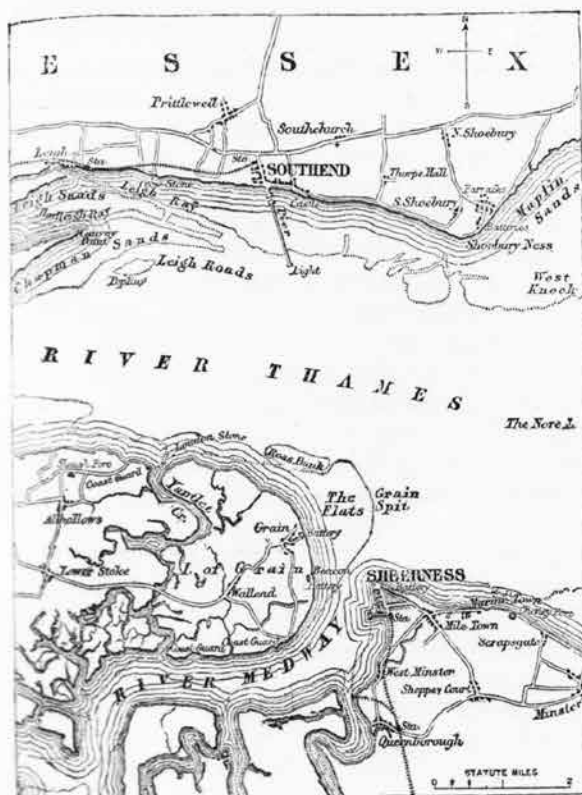
About two hours after I left the West Nore Sand, I was among the ships lying in the Great Nore Anchorage. The ships lay at anchor in the sunshine waiting to enter the river Medway and the port of Sheerness.

It was an idyllic scene of sea and ships marred only by a whistle buoy wailing a plaintive note on each wave that passed. The whistle buoy guards the wreck of an ammunition ship that went aground and broke its back during the Second World War. The fully laden ship has remained an untouchable bomb ever since. The melancholic howl of that buoy followed me to fairway buoy No. 3, which is about 3 miles north of Minster on the Isle of Sheppey.

I reckoned the ebb had almost finished its run so it was time to seek the shore and thus avoid the full effect of the flooding tide. It was further to the shore than I had anticipated and I laboured mightily before the hazy shadow of Warden Point and its coastguard station became clearly defined. By the time I was close under the cliff of Warden Point, the tide was flooding strongly and I crept along the shore past Priory Hill and Laysdown-on-Sea with its ranks of caravans to Shell Ness.

Just before the old coastguard house at Shell Ness, there is a ridge of hard black mud and shells. I ran aground on this ridge to rest for a little while. The tide rose and covered the ridge, so I rowed on following the shore. A fog slowly formed and all landmarks slowly faded from view until I was left with just water lapping on the edge of a boundless area of mud. I then became curious about my direction because the sun was in the wrong place and my compass needle agreed with my observations. I was heading South when I should have been heading East. It was all very strange. I stopped rowing, consulted my chart, stared at my compass needle which danced erratically on the surface of the water within the baling scoop and I remained puzzled. The problem was one that has faced every navigator and leads to a simple question:

When does one put blind faith in instruments? I





Groynes towards Seasalter on The Swale

delayed the moment of decision for a while and stuck to following the shore. Confusion was heaped on confusion; visibility was a hundred yards; I was heading South instead of East and the tide was now flowing with me when it should be flowing against me. None of it made sense! In the end I put my faith in the sun and in my compass and turned to row away from the shore.

I left the shore and all around was water. I was very alone. Suddenly the fog began to clear and there I was in the middle of the Swale. I burst out laughing and pulled over that narrow waterway that winds round behind the Isle of Harty. Andrea Bianco, my mediaeval chart maker, hadn't known of that creek and I had forgotten it. On the far side of the Swale I found a small yacht hard aground and the crew of two busy scraping the bottom. They admitted an error of navigation and were now filling in the hours until the tide returned.

It was a couple of miles to Whitstable but the flooding tide made it seem nearer five miles. I struggled into that cheerful little port very worn out. I moored among the fishing boats and I went ashore. Just at closing time, I placed my foot in the door of the first restaurant from the harbour. Whilst the staff prepared for the morrow, I made inroads into a scratch meal of hamburgers, cake and lots of tea. I went back to the harbour a new man and chatted to a local about fish and the prices that the various species were fetching in that area.

About an hour before high water, I left the harbour with a vague notion of finding a beach to haul the boat up for the night. I passed through the gaps in Herne Bay



pier about the time of high water. Dusk came quickly and soon I was rowing in the dark with the light on the head of Herne Bay pier as my stern mark. It was a beautiful night, clear and calm. The ebbing tide carried me along; Reculver came and went; I set to work to row a hard, fast course just to try myself over a distance. Somewhere off Birchington my efforts were rewarded. I pulled a muscle in my lower back. It hurt! I limped into Westgate Bay as the street lights were going out, and in a few feet of water I let go anchor. I wrapped my jellaba about me and was asleep before I had stretched out on the floor of the boat.

Day Three — Tuesday 5th June, 1979

I woke at dawn, stiff with coldness. Breakfast was a handful of dates and a cup of water, after which I hauled up the anchor and started to row. The blisters on my hands were painful but I found that after a few minutes the pain faded away and I was able to pull as hard as I wished. It had become a habit to wash my hands with surgical spirit every time I stopped rowing, but I am undecided if it was worthwhile. The back muscle which the previous night had seemed like a red hot poker was now behaving itself and I felt fine.

Margate pier, even though it had successfully resisted every effort made to demolish it, was looking very battered and I passed through a gap in the structure without difficulty. Far away, over my shoulder, I could see the cliffs at Foreness rising out of a very grey mist.

Two tidal streams meet hereabouts and the water began to become confused and when I reached the Longnose buoy, the sea was very choppy, even though the wind was almost a dead calm. I moved in to creep along at the foot of the cliffs, keeping the glazed turret of the North Foreland lighthouse just in view above the cliff top.

I reached the little town of Broadstairs at about 7 o'clock and having moored my boat among the assorted vessels which were sheltering behind the harbour wall, I went ashore for a cup of coffee and two slices of buttered toast. The coffee and toast gave me new strength and within half an hour of my arrival I left Broadstairs and continued to follow the cliffs to Ramsgate.

The tide was flowing strongly against me when I reached Ramsgate and it was a pleasure to enter the harbour to gain shelter. I moored *Susannah* to a large and oily mooring ring and scrambled up a long ladder to make my way to the watch tower at the entrance of the harbour. There, I explained my mission to the Officer of the Watch and to a Customs Officer who was with him. They considered me thoughtfully whilst sipping cups of tea. I think they took pity on the unkempt creature that stood before them because I was given a cup too.

Ramsgate was a nice friendly sort of town and I did some shopping: apples, biscuits, and sticking plaster for my hands. For lunch, I had some fish and chips whilst sitting by the harbour side. In my mind, I debated whether or not to row to France from Ramsgate or to move on down the coast to Dover. I returned to the Officer of the Watch and told him that I would try for France. It seemed that my row really started as I passed out of the harbour

(Left) Beach at Whitstable

and the big black flag which prohibited movement came fluttering down. France was 30 miles away — 30 miles of open water with no creeks or beaches to give me refuge.

I was less than a mile from the harbour when, with that distinctive crash, the lifeboat maroon sailed into the air leaving a long trail of brown smoke. I looked about wildly; admittedly, the wind had gained in force and now and then the sea would burst under my bow sending spray high into the air, but I didn't need a lifeboat. I felt quite wretched when I saw the lifeboat come out of the harbour, but to my delight, it turned and rushed off to the north. My delight soon faded when I thought of the possible reasons why the lifeboat had gone pounding away over the horizon.

I plodded on but the wind veered SSE which meant I was rowing into it and after another half hour, it had gained even more force. Things were becoming unpleasant and I began to take solid green water over the bow. I turned and the wind blew me back to Ramsgate. The lifeboat, towing a disabled French yacht, entered the harbour just before me, so in a way I didn't feel my retreat was unjustified.

I had just entered the harbour for the second time that day when the wind, seemingly pleased with its efforts, fell away to a dead calm. I scrambled up the ladder to the Officer of the Watch and told him I would sneak along the shore to Dover.

Once again, I left Ramsgate and headed for Pegwell Bay.

Pegwell Bay is where it is said a standard bearer leapt into the water and thus introduced Roman Culture into these islands. In this bay, it is also said the first Englishmen stormed ashore to settle in the rich farmland of Kent.

I wonder what those warriors would have done if they had seen a hovercraft! When a large hovercraft with engines roaring, generating sheets of flying spray went howling past me, I broke into a cold sweat and

rowed as one demented. I didn't stop rowing until well clear of the path taken by these curious machines.

I crept along the shoreline until I came to a place where there was a small launching ramp. The ramp spanned the stony beach, and over the crest of the beach I could see a group of houses. It seemed an ideal place to land and rest. The sun was shining and the small waves soon carried me on to the beach, where I dragged *Susannah* clear of the surf. I went exploring. In the garden of the first house I came to, a lady was hard at work with a hacksaw and hammer removing some ironwork from a mast. I explained my mission and gave a hand with the blacksmithing. My reward was tea and biscuits and some useful information concerning the tides, and that I was ashore on the Sandwich Bay Estate.

Back on the beach, I faced the problem of getting the boat afloat again. Landing a boat through surf is easy compared with the task of launching one. Several times, I pushed *Susannah* out into the oncoming wavelets but each time her bow was caught by a breaker and she spun on her keel to rush back to the beach, there to be swamped.

In the end, I unloaded and stacked everything on the beach. Then I shoved her out into the sea, wading with her until some of the coldest water in the world was lapping round my navel; an inelegant roll put me into the boat and a few strokes with the oars took me clear of the surf. Once clear of the surf, I dropped anchor and then paid out the rope until *Susannah* was almost back in the surf. Over the side again and into that freezing water I went, to spend half an hour carrying all the stores and equipment on my shoulders from the beach to the boat. At last, when all was loaded and stowed away, I was able to haul up the anchor and set off along the coast towards Deal.

It was almost twilight when I came to Deal. The tide was then running hard against me, but the members of Deal rowing club must have an understanding with the Almighty because the tide flow meant nothing to the crew of a four-oared 'galley' which swept past me. The galley rapidly disappeared into the gathering dusk but I could hear the cox 'encouraging' his crew long after its disappearance. At Deal pier, I mutinied, let go anchor and sulked on the floor. I had good reason to sulk; the tide was against me and less than 50 feet away stood Deal waterfront packed with pubs, cafés and restaurants. All these eating places were on the other side of the surf line and therefore out of my reach. I lay wrapped in my jellaba watching the lights of Deal go out one by one until at last only the stars shone in the heavens. I must have slept because I don't remember the moon rising. PA



(Left) Patrick and *Susannah*

Julia May Goes to Sea

By Dennis and Linda Bradley

The *Julia May (JM)* was launched July of '93, you may recall the brief report in *Messing About in Boats* that fall, and the remainder of that year and all of '94 provided delightful experiences. Phil Bolger's Long Micro, or Macro Micro I prefer, has proved to be an amazing craft! I know, designers constantly remind us that every design is a compromise of various factors that contribute to cost, stability, capacity, speed, and comfort. Still, the *JM* is perfect.

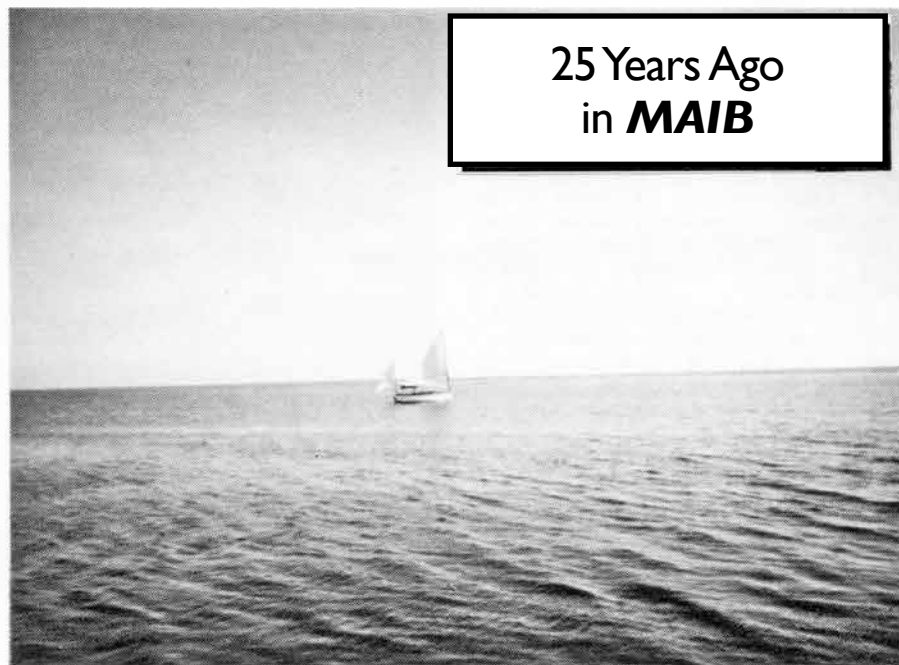
Of course, my euphoria may be a reaction to the financial hemorrhage which only stopped in January of '94 when the 30' C&C we bought new in '89 was sold. Aaaaaah, no more shared charter revenue, exorbitant dockage, insurance, storage, haul out and plop in charges, let alone debt service. Now that the bleeding has been stanchied, Linda says my color is much better, thank you very much.

As an aside on this "yacht" infatuation, if anyone is experiencing the urge to buy a new (by definition, expensive) boat, call me at (900) UMA-BSRY. Our compassionate staff will try to get you through the crisis, perhaps even saving your marriage, children's inheritance, mental health. All this and more are at risk. Only \$10/minute. Sounds a bit steep, but our wisdom didn't come cheap. Truly, we don't own "things", "things" own us. Even the *JM*, though less demanding, still has a price.

In her launch report, we promised ourselves a Florida visit and were lucky enough to do so for more than two weeks last March. *Messing About in Boats* had carried fascinating stories about Cedar Key (CK) by Hugh Horton and interesting letters by Mike Leiner and we made inquiries. Of course, CK is in the "Keys" right? Wrong. In case there are any more ignoramuses like me out there, its on the north-east gulf coast between the Suwanee and Wackasassa rivers, about 100 miles north of Tampa, and a full day's drive from the Keys proper. A call to Mike quickly straightened that out and the local Chamber sent more details. While the brochures were nice, our disappointment in finding out where it really was gave us pause.

After all, its definitely not the "Keys" where that spring we had chartered one of Bolger's Black Gauntlets, a 35' leeboard sharpie yawl. Indeed, that trip led to building the *JM*. But what the heck, it's on the way so we might as well stop by, if for no other reason, than to talk to Mike, a Bolgerian if ever there was such a thing, and to "show off" our boat.

Our trip from St. Paul, took three easy days at about 55mph, camping in the boat at an interesting assortment of campgrounds. The last 80 miles or so from Gainesville were the longest, as my patience which had been remarkable up to that point, evaporated. As we emerged from the forests and swamps on to the CK causeway about an hour before sunset, the long drive was more than worth it. Lovely marshes stretched away to the horizons on both sides and the gulf and bayou sparkled



in the low evening sun. We soon found Mike at The Island Place, the condos he and his wife manage. And for the next two weeks he was always checking up on us to see that all was going well.

That first evening in CK was a repeat of many other stops we'd made on the way down, a constant barrage of questions by people who hadn't seen anything like the *JM* and wanted more details, all of which, with my chest puffed out, I was more than willing to satisfy. Linda, of course already knew that I never tired from the attention. Indeed I had hoped for it and had copies of a study plan and spec sheet for just this eventuality.

Nevertheless, there is a down side. It is my considered opinion that any Bolger plans distributor is bound by common decency to include a warning label. Something to the effect: "Warning: The US Bureau of Shipping and the Naval Architect-General have determined that building a Bolger design is hazardous to your anonymity, should you cherish it."

Well the long and the short of it is that we never left CK for the remainder of our time, over two weeks. It was just too full of friendly people, and had too many possibilities to explore in our short stay. Of course, Hugh Horton's several articles about it made that clear already.

Speaking of which, we met Hugh and his father Hal that night (coincidentally, also names of our sons) who had just finished several days cruising and were heading back to Michigan. Fortunately we had dinner with them that evening at Cook's restaurant, the veritable hub of CK's civic life, and learned many things. Especially that Gosling Black Label Bermudan rum is even better than Meyer's Dark or Pusser's. At \$20 a bottle it better be.

And this unplanned meeting was just one of many highlights. There were the many retirees who visited us regularly for details about our adventure. The young couple on their live-aboard workboat from the Chesapeake on their way to Carabelle Island to scallop who tied up along side for two days of fuel pump problems which required our truck and an 80 mile trip to an

engine repair shop. The CK resident woman naturalist, tour leader, bookstore owner, clam rancher, Bolger work skiff builder, who hosted breakfast at a local restaurant each Friday. She provided a fascinating update on all the birds and plants of note and we took one of her marsh tours. Mysteriously, a live Marbled Murrelet (rather drab despite its name) showed up in CK from the Pacific Northwest and for the next week the harbor was besieged by Audubons from all over the east coast.

Then there was Dan, the 20-year retiree from NY's Finest, who spent a few days with us. With forearms bigger than Popeye's he had just arrived on his outrigger /sail/row/canoe via the Hudson, Erie Canal, Great Lakes, Chicago, Mississippi River, Nawlins, and Gulf coast on his way to NYC via the real "Keys" and the ICW. In one stretch of the Mississippi, since he always rowed while looking at where he'd been, he missed a turn and went over a 6 foot wing dam backwards. We also drove Dan to Crystal River to visit the manatee park, and to meet his girlfriend who flew down to join him for a few days.

There was the seafood potluck dinner sponsored by the CK Library Club, and a couple who had us over for dinner. And to top it off, while Dan and I went for a sail and exploration of Rattlesnake Key one afternoon, Linda ran into my good friend Tom and wife from high school and college who I'd not seen for over 25 years.

But maybe you're more interested in how the *JM* was to trailer, launch, set up, and sail. For aside from the brief note about her launch, little has been reported. First, at 1900lbs on a 2800lb capacity single-axle trailer, she tows easily with our '92 Ford Ranger supercab and 4.0 liter V-6. I'd originally planned on getting a trailer with rollers but now believe that adjustable padded bunks under the sides and keel provide superior support. Launching is still easy. Its a Spartan trailer made in Minnesota and guide rails on each side of the keel support make centering a snap.

Set up, launch, and sail away by my myself takes 1/2 to 3/4 of an hour assuming no questions are asked! All spars, in-

cluding a 29', 90lb mainmast, are supported during transport by a removable rack spanning the main hatch, and a permanent laminated gallows spanning the quarter decking. The mainmast is hinged about 4' above its base on a rugged tabernacle hard by the bow. A 4' lever (with *JM's* name carved in it) hinged at the bow's waterline is swung up, lashed to the mast and tabernacle, and holds everything safely in place. This feature got special oohs and ahs.

Common Sense's plan catalog (Madison Avenue's influence is apparent here) suggests that the mast can be raised by a small boy. Not so! At least not without a ballasted base whose weight so far forward, would serve no good purpose after raising. Nevertheless, raising the mast is no challenge for a reasonably able person, and the No-Sweat system has me lifting from the cabin deck while a small person (usually Linda) stands on the truck's bumper and hangs on to the butt. Mast weight practically disappears when you approach 45 degrees, and once up, its inertia allows it to be easily lashed in place. Reversing is just as easy.

Bolger's affection for the self-standing cat yawl rig is certainly warranted and stands in dramatic contrast to other more complicated rigs. Who can argue about its amazing simplicity and effectiveness. My brother-in-law Walt, who used to race with us on Lake Superior, was dumbfounded on how easy she was to handle.

No more warning of "Ready about," waiting for someone to find the @*&\$ winch handle and ready the lazy jib sheet, another to uncleat the working jib sheet and take a few wraps off the winch, while the helmsman got hold of the main sheet traveler and checked for traffic. Followed next by the cry "Hard alee" and several more (un)coordinated actions, with a high probability of hackles jamming at the turning blocks, over eager trimmers tearing the clews out or wearing holes in the leach on the spreaders. And then someone has to run forward to lift the 'deck-sweep' genoa over the lifelines.

With the Long Micro you just put the helm over and relax. Everything takes care of itself. Well almost. On the way from the launch ramp to the beach in front of the Island Place, in my excitement to make an impressive anchoring (you may have suspected that I was a show-off already), I didn't see the concrete daymark for the small boat basin channel hidden behind my mainsail. Fortunately I only hit it with the main sprit and took away a little red paint that wasn't quite as bright as my face. My terse advice to sailors I've taught was that the only sure way NOT to scratch a boat is to leave it on the trailer (Actually, its not safe there either). And I'm nothing if not a good example.

Once clear of the dock you first put up the mizzen, which in this case means unwrapping the mizzen already laced to the mast, snap its clew to the outer end of its sprit, thread the snorter thru its block, belay it, and trim the sheet dead center. All this takes a few seconds standing safely under the gallows in the motor well. The mizzen then brings the bow into the wind so that the main can be raised, and its snorter tightened in turn. And while the boat just sits there head to wind or starts to



drift back, you take less than a minute to coil down the main halyard and its snorter.

Reversing your helm to help her back down which ever way you want, you tighten the main sheet or even back the main abit to help her around, ease out the mizzen and your off! Some folks are troubled by the asymmetry of the sprit. And I do notice a slight difference in performance at low wind speed, but certainly not enough to warrant making a wishbone. I have the main sprit on the starboard side so that when 'heaving to' the main doesn't chafe in the sprit, and so the mizzen, with its mast off-center to starboard, can be brought to port with a foreguy.

The mizzen is the cause of many questions especially because it is off-center. But as Bolger points out, this is of little consequence. Its primarily a steering sail to weather, a riding sail at anchor, although it helps considerably reaching and running. But its maneuvering advantages are its forte. Early on, especially during fairly stiff breezes, I puzzled that just after tacking and with little forward motion, and with the boat just beginning to fall off on her new tack, she'd stop the swing and head back up again in irons, despite my giving her more rudder. The mizzen was the cause and the solution apparent.

When tacking, first harden the mizzen to help bring the boat into the wind. Then put the helm alee and just as the bow swings thru the 'eye' you ease the mizzen sheet for a few moments. This lets her momentum and hull windage keep her swinging, and when she gathers way on her new tack, you can once again trim the mizzen appropriately. The *JM's* full length but shallow keel may not permit her to spin like a fin-keeler but even at low speeds she'll tack from a beam reach, which surprised me.

The *JM* is very fast and as I said, maneuverable. Well heeled, she presents a comfortable vee-hull with lots of lateral plane and goes to weather really well. A curious phenomenon under sail is what at first appeared to be a mooring line trailing out under the stern wake. Turns out it's a solid vortex of air sucked under at the bow

which persists as far back as one can see. The full sail area is 264sq ft and may seem like too much for a 19+ footer. However, you can always reef her, but you can't unfurl what you don't have.

In Minnesota, and many other areas I'm sure, its not the windy days that present a problem, but the "light and variables". You'll be glad you have it unless you really wanted a motor boat. I've even thought that the mizzen might be a bit bigger as in higher winds it doesn't present quite enough windage to keep her head up. But I don't know what disadvantage it would present. Any comments Phil??

Regarding stability, you may also recall that on *JM's* second time in the water, I knocked her on her side and Linda sprained her ankle. It was my fault. First, I had installed the main sheet cam cleat upside down so that I couldn't snap it free from a distance. My second mistake was to get caught by a 25+ mph gust while dead in the water with a full main and the main sheet trimmed hard. Yet I wanted to see just what she could do since the first time in the water, there was little breeze at all.

With no way on, and with the sheet locked, she couldn't round up in time. It was a slow-motion but inexorable knock-down as I couldn't snap the sheet loose and I couldn't get to it while hanging on to the gunwale. Meanwhile Linda was in severe pain, another passenger's mouth gaped and her eyes were wide, and the dog puzzled why her feet were wet. The *JM* just lay on her side with the water completely covering the main, but a safe foot from the cockpit hatch and companion.

When I finally released the main sheet, she came back up with me standing on the high side. It was a warm July day in warm shallow water near shore. But while I was sincerely curious to see what would happen under these relatively harmless conditions and was trying to observe the incident objectively (right), Linda's possible broken ankle made that kind of difficult. Much experience since then in 30 knot winds and more, and lots of it single handed, have reassured me that the *JM* is plenty stiff. I'd like to take her to Cuba when tensions ease.

Of course, "reef early and often" is always good advice. But if you're surprised, easing the sheet or outright releasing it is the natural thing to do. I usually just "head her up in the puffs" as the adage goes and ease her back off when the puff dies. If there is a problem with too much wind, its generally because you're going to weather anyway. If you need to reef, just harden the mizzen, drop the main, and do it while the mizzen keeps your head to the wind.

One key addition to the *JM* was a 6'x 6'x48" high, factory-made, three-bow Bimini. It's mounted on the cockpit deck and "mirabile visu", the foot of the main "scrapes" over it under sail! It covers almost the entire cockpit, has two small clear windows to observe the sails, and at 5'10" I can stand up under it with several inches to spare. It protects from both sun and rain even without side curtains. On otherwise cool days, even in northern climes, sitting in the full sun all day is extremely tiring, not to mention risky.

Another feature added, following Phil's hint, was to build two ditty boxes to support the cockpit hatch cover/foot rests

in good weather. These boxes are 1' wide, the exact depth of the keel at midships, and about 2' long. When the *JM* dries out at low tide, these sub-micro tenders (named *Hugh* and *Hal*), with painters attached to the main halyard and snorter cleats, are placed under each chine to hold her up.

When the tide returns, this fleet of bumboats (you don't know my sons) bob around patiently until invited back aboard. Further, the main now leads to the ends of the gallows, a topping lift was added to the main sprit, and a different reefing method was worked out.

JM's accommodations are also superb. Unlike the case with so many other small boat designs, Bolger eschewed the trunk cabin. Even with 4" cushions on a 5" bunk platform, there is comfortable sitting head room for 6 footers with no crooks in your neck. A porta-potti sits under the 2' x 4' main hatchway or out of sight thru the opening under the cockpit. Anchors and warp are in his novel 'bow-transom'.

While camping in cold weather on the way to CK, we stored a propane tank for making coffee and warming the cabin. We turned the gas on by reaching out the 1sq ft port into the bow transom. But generally, we keep the propane in the motor well and cook under the Bimini.

The *JM* has storage for two 55qt coolers, a deep cycle battery, boat hook, fenders, lunch hook, pots and pans, snorkeling gear, life jackets, tool boxes, ditty bag, fishing rods and tackle, ten gallons of water, and more. And this doesn't include the under bunk storage, under and on top of the "dresser" forward, and two nylon gear hammocks.

Mosquito netting weighted at its edges with brass chain, and held in place by velcro, covers the whole main companionway under the hatch. A 5 watt solar cell recharges the battery to power radio/CD player and three small lamps. Laying at anchor, with the stars visible thru the netting, a bit of the sea breeze coming in thru the forehatch, a good book and a bossa nova in the background, and a cappuccino, as I already said, she's perfect.

Linda's back spasmed out when we first got to CK so we rented a room at The Island Place where she quickly recovered, no doubt due to the hot tub, pool, and more comfortable beds. Yet this "slight" change in plans actually worked out just fine. I had to sleep aboard each night (hardly penance) because the dock by the launch ramp wasn't designed for leaving the boat unattended with the 3 to 5 foot tides twice a day. And the bridge over the channel into the small boat basin would have meant taking the mast down each nite.

Yet with all the other activities, including a trip to a manatee park, we never sailed up the Suwanee or Wackasassa. Next time for sure. I also single-handed several days while Linda recuperated. The tides were a new experience and the currents among the islands impressive. One of my more delightful memories is tacking back and forth across a channel with mud flats just about to dry out on either hand. On the leeward side with one hand on the tiller and telescopic boat hook in the other. I used it to find the bottom and then just put the helm over.



There were sun drenched beaches and palm shaded islands on either hand, dolphins surfacing occasionally, sea birds fishing in a big rip where the current was deflected to the surface by a mud bank, and no other vessels in sight. And there have been other adventures too. The dead, bloated and aromatic male (definitely male) dolphin I chased and lassooed from the *JM* for the Florida Game and Fish, thinking at first that it was a dead manatee.

Thanks again Mike for all your help. It was truly one of the best vacations we ever had, even with Linda's sore back and this is high praise. Hope to get to one of your messabouts someday. Thanks too to Phil Bolger, the *JM's* all we imagined. I'd recommend her construction to anyone and would be happy to discuss it with them (on their nickel of course). Only regret that I waited so long to rediscover the joys of small(er) boats.



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Miami Florida

The Coast Guard searched for two overdue boaters aboard the 38' sailing vessel *Jenny* between Islamorada and Hollywood. Coast Guard 7th District watchstanders received a report from the owner of the vessel stating that the two boaters were supposed to have arrived with his sailing vessel. Watchstanders launched a Coast Guard Air Station Miami HC-144 Ocean Sentry airplane crew and the Coast Guard Cutter *Cochito* (WPB-87329) crew to search.



Corpus Christi, Texas

The Coast Guard has suspended the search for the owner of an unmanned, adrift kayak found near Aransas Pass, Texas. The search began when Coast Guard Sector/Air Station Corpus Christi watchstanders received notification from a good Samaritan of an unmanned and adrift kayak with gear and lights onboard. A Coast Guard Air Station Corpus Christi MH-65 Dolphin helicopter crew and a Coast Guard Station Port Aransas Response Boat-Small boat crew were launched to search the area.

Involved in the search were Coast Guard Air Station Corpus Christi MH-65 Dolphin helicopter crew, Coast Guard Station Port Aransas Response Boat-Small boat crew, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department personnel.



Our Coast Guard in Action

New Orleans, Louisiana

The Coast Guard searched for a possible missing person in the Intracoastal Waterway somewhere between Morgan City, Louisiana, and Rockport, Texas. The Coast Guard received a report of possibly missing 76-year-old white male and his 36' white trawling vessel, *Poison*. According to the reporting source, Johnson was headed west across the Intracoastal Waterway from mile marker 99 to mile marker 521 starting in late February. The trip was estimated to take six to eight days.

Houston, Texas

The Coast Guard has ended its search for the owner of an unmanned, adrift 16' fishing vessel that was located south of Tiki Island in Galveston, Texas. Coast Guard Sector Houston-Galveston watchstanders received notification from a good Samaritan of the unmanned vessel. Watchstanders issued an urgent marine information broadcast to vessels in the area. A Coast Guard Air Station Houston MH-65 Dolphin helicopter crew was launched to search. The owner was found safe and is making plans to salvage the vessel. Involved in the search were Coast Guard Sector Houston-Galveston, Coast Guard Air Station Houston, Galveston Beach Patrol, Galveston Police Department.

Boston, Massachusetts

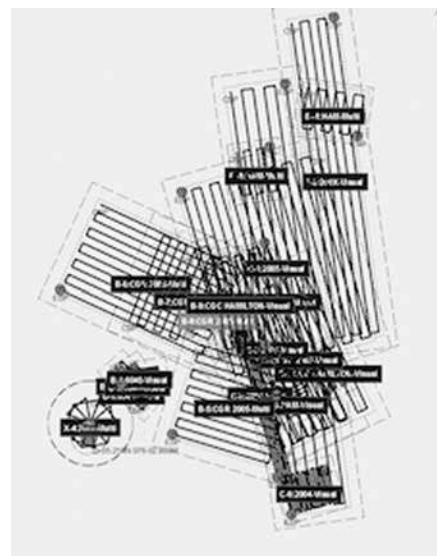
The US Coast Guard suspended its search for three missing fishermen in the waters off Massachusetts. Watchstanders at the Coast Guard District One command center initially received an Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) alert from the fishing boat *Leonardo*, which capsized and sank 24 nautical miles southwest of Martha's Vineyard. Crewmembers from Coast Guard Air Station Cape Cod launched an MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter and rescued one person from a life raft. It was reported the missing were not wearing survival suits or life jackets.

The search spanned over 25 hours and includes the following assets: Coast Guard Cutter *Escanaba*, Coast Guard Cutter *Cobia*, Coast Guard Air Station Cape Cod. After all leads are exhausted, the Coast Guard suspends a search pending new information.

Wilmington, North Carolina

The Coast Guard suspended its search after an unregistered emergency position indicating radio beacon alert led responders to debris approximately 126 miles southeast off the coast of Wilmington, North Carolina. Coast Guard crews from Air Station Elizabeth City, the Coast Guard Cutter *Hamilton* and Automated Mutual-Assistance Vessel Rescue System vessels searched approximately 2,663 square miles. There were no additional signs of distress reported or vessels known to be overdue in the area.

"We would like to thank our maritime partners in AMVER who agreed to assist in this case," said Lt jg Victoria Moon, watchstander during the case "We ask that owners of EPIRB's ensure they register their devices. It allows us to quickly reach the owners in emergency situations and expedites search and rescue.



Miami, Florida

The Coast Guard suspended the search for two boaters who had been missing after they were reported overdue. Watchstanders at Coast Guard Sector Miami received the initial call from family stating a father and son were traveling from Panama City to Vero Beach, Florida, by the Okeechobee Waterway. Since the search began Coast Guard air and surface units conducted over 56 searches covering more than 109,319 square nautical miles.

Coast Guard assets and other agencies who responded included: Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater HC-130H, MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter, Coast Guard Aviation Training Center (ATC) Mobile MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter, HC-144, Coast Guard Air Station Elizabeth City HC-130J, Air Station Miami HC-144A Ocean Sentry, Coast Guard Cutter *Brant* (WPB-87348), Coast Guard Cutter *Charles Sexton* (WPC-1108), Coast Guard Cutter *Harriet Lane* (WMEC-903), Coast Guard Cutter *Kathleen Moore* (WPC-1109), Coast Guard Cutter *Albacore* (WPB-87309), US Air Force E-9A Widget, Civil Air Patrol, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

"Suspending a search without a positive outcome is a very difficult decision," said Capt Eric Smith, search and rescue mission coordinator on the case. "Despite our best efforts, we were unable to locate the vessel and our condolences go out to the families and friends of those who remain missing."

New Orleans, Louisiana

The Coast Guard suspended its search for a person in the water in the Port Allen Route near Belle River, Louisiana. Coast Guard crews searched over eight square-nautical miles of the river continuously for approximately 20 hours but were unable to find the missing person.

Involved in the search were: Coast Guard Station New Orleans 29' Response Boat-Small boat crew, Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit Baton Rouge 29' Response Boat-Small boat crew, Coast Guard Air Station New Orleans MH-65 Dolphin Helicopter aircrew, Iberville Sheriff's Office, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

Juneau, Alaska

The Coast Guard suspended its search for five missing fishermen in the waters near Sutwik Island, Alaska. Watchstanders at the 17th District Command Center in Juneau were notified of a mayday call via high frequency radio on from the fishing vessel *Scandies Rose*, which capsized and sank approximately five miles southeast of Sutwik Island.

MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter and HC-130 Hercules airplane crews were launched from Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak. The Jayhawk helicopter crew arrived on scene and rescued two survivors from a life raft. The survivors were taken to the hospital in Kodiak, where they were reported to be in stable condition.

The search spanned over 20 hours, 1,400 square miles and included the following assets: 4 MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter crews, 2 HC-130 Hercules airplane crews, Coast Guard Cutter *Mellon* (WHEC 717).

Sitka, Alaska

The Coast Guard suspended the search for an overdue kayaker near Sitka, Alaska, who was reported missing to Coast Guard Sector Juneau watchstanders after failing to arrive from an early morning kayaking trip from Sitka to Birdsnest Bay. An MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter crew from Air Station Sitka spotted the kayak on Cannon Island. Earlier that morning a good Samaritan located the kayak overturned and adrift in the Eastern Channel before towing it to Cannon Island.

"This is a tough case and hits hard to all of us here in Sitka," said Capt Mike Frawley, commanding officer of Air Station Sitka. "We are a small, close knit community which was evident by the outpouring of volunteer searchers."

The search spanned more than 45 hours, 111 square miles and included the following assets: MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter crews from Coast Guard Air Station Sitka, 26' Trailerable Aids to Navigation boat crews from Aids to Navigation Team Sitka, Coast Guard Cutter *Bailey Barco* crew, Sitka Mountain Rescue boat crews, US Forest Service boat crews.

St Petersburg, Florida

The Coast Guard suspended its search for a missing mariner who was participating in the Water Tribe Everglades Challenge. Coast Guard assets and other agencies who responded included: Coast Guard Station Ft Myers Beach 45' Response Boat Medium, Coast Guard Cutter *Diamondback* (WPB-87370), Coast Guard Cutter *Pelican* (WPB-87327), Coast Guard Cutter *Charles David, Jr.* (WPC 1107), Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater HC-130J, Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater MH-60 Jayhawk, Coast

Guard Air Station Miami HC-144A Ocean Sentry, Coast Guard Auxiliary Air Patrol, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Collier County Sheriff's Office.

Coast Guard Sector St Petersburg command center received a report from the son that his father was off track of the organized event path. His last personal tracking device check-in was reported Monday at 7:24am. A Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater HC-130J aircrew located his blue 17' Core Sound sailing vessel Monday evening. A Clearwater MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter crew found no one aboard. Since the search began Coast Guard air and surface units conducted over 46 searches covering more than 9,772 square nautical miles.

New Orleans, Louisiana

The Coast Guard and local agencies suspended a search for a person in the water in the Port Allen Route near Belle River, Louisiana. Watchstanders at Coast Guard Sector New Orleans received a report at 9:50pm that a 14' skiff carrying four crewmembers from the *ITV Melvin L. King* struck a towing vessel and all four people entered the water at mile marker 41. Two people were rescued on the bank of Port Allen Route. One body was recovered by the Iberville Sheriff's Office. One crewmember is still missing.

Involved in the search are: Coast Guard Station New Orleans 29' Response Boat-Small crew, Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit Baton Rouge 29' Response Boat-Small crew, Coast Guard Air Station New Orleans MH-65 Dolphin Helicopter crew, Iberville Sheriff's Office, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. The cause of the incident is under investigation.

Honolulu, Hawaii

The Coast Guard concluded the search for two fishermen presumed swept off the shore of Hawaii Island who remain missing. "Pending any further developments, we've suspended the active search for these men," said Cmdr Benjamin Gates, Deputy Sector Commander, Coast Guard Sector Honolulu. "Responders conducted 28 separate searches and covered nearly 1,000 square nautical miles in their combined effort to find the two men."

Involved in the searches were: Hawaii County Fire "Chopper 1" helicopter crews, Hawaii County Fire ground teams, Hawaii County Police, A Coast Guard HC-130 Hercules airplane crew, Coast Guard MH-65 Dolphin helicopter crew, US Marine Corps Forces Pacific Huey and Cobra helicopter crews, the crew of the USCGC *Joseph Gerczak* (WPC 1126).

Hawaii County Dispatch relayed information to the Coast Guard reporting the two fishermen overdue after receiving a report from a family member at 5:46am. that the two men went fishing at 5pm in street clothes at Whittington Beach Park on the southeast side of the island and were expected back before midnight. Responders located the fishermen's vehicles in the beach park and their gear onshore in the breaking surf zone. The weather on scene was around 15mph winds and seas up to 8'.

Remembering Robb White

It's been 14 years this spring since Robb White suddenly died during an operation intended to keep a main brain artery open, bringing to a sudden end his long series of wonderfully entertaining, opinionated and informative stories commencing in the May 15, 1997 issue with "Building Boats in Georgia" and suddenly ending nine years later in the May 15, 2006 issue with "A Rude Awakening Involving a Toilet, a Skunk and 50 Bucks an Inch." There were 209 of them in the 216 issues we published during that period.

Robb comes to mind from time to time, this time a brief note from Rex and Kathy Payne who had just built one of Robb's "improved Grumman sport boats" and were selling it to make room for the next in their retirement shop in Florida.

"We are selling our Robb White "improved sport boat," cypress stripped, glassed inside and out. We call it "Chicken-feed" after his story about how his version of the old Grumman sport boat came to be. The boat is just shy of 16' overall, 44" beam. Included is a Trailex aluminum trailer, all for \$1950."



Well, the boat has long since been sold but the story deserves another telling in our opinion, so on the following pages we bring back Robb's entire "Improved Sport Boat" series. Those of you who were with us during those years can enjoy refreshing their memories of Robb's wonderful writings, while those who missed them back then, well, here's some of the best. Enjoy.

I have an aluminum Grumman Sport Boat. I know, what with all the pontificating I do, that such news is probably a shocker so I guess I'll have to explain myself... do a little more pontificating. I am no kind of purist about anything except for how I don't like to do anything that I don't want to do. I just love a good small boat (I am at the best, indifferent about big boats, they are kind of more trouble than joy, I have a long list of little things that I won't lay on you at this time).

It doesn't make any difference if the thing is made out of roto-moulded polyethylene or galvanized tin, a good boat is a good boat and a Grumman Sport Boat is a good boat. Of course, it ain't quite as good as the one in the shop right now... an open sea rowboat sixteen feet long by six feet wide by probably less than a hundred pounds hull weight and so strong that three stooges couldn't stomp the bottom out of it, but a Grumman Sport Boat is a good boat... took me many years to figure out how to build something better.

The first Grumman Sport Boat I ever saw was way back in the middle '50s and I only caught the briefest glimpse of it on a trailer on the paved road behind a V8 Ford station wagon. I tried to get a better look but Momma's 36 horse Volkswagen just couldn't catch up no matter how hard I hunched behind the wheel. I was relentless in my pursuit even as a boy (15 at the time with a special driver's license that I had had since I was 14 because we lived so far beyond the school bus run) and it didn't take me long to interrogate around and find out what kind of boat it was.

Then I set to to get me one and an outboard motor to go with it. At first I tried to coerce my father into springing for the money by the use of eloquent explanation but he said, "We already got the Reynolds so what do we need another aluminum boat for?"

"It is so light and easy to handle that y'all wouldn't have had such a mess on that Ochlocknee River trip that time," said me.

"I don't have any plans for another Ochlocknee River trip in the near future, so I don't need the ideal boat," was his final statement. With that, I knew I had to get me a job and buy the boat on my own.

I went to work for the "Chicken King of Cairo, Georgia" (that's pronounced "Karo" like the corn syrup that originated in that metropolis). I didn't have to submit my resume or stand for an interview or anything. The job was unloading boxcars of chicken feed at fifteen bucks a car and if you could do it before the railroad deadline, the job was yours, if you couldn't... and particularly if you couldn't pay the demurrage for the extra day (coincidentally, also \$15) your ass was gone. I was kind of small and unused to hard work but I was smart. I slipped in the side door as a striker for a big black man whose name will remain anonymous since I don't know what the statute of limitations situation is for some of the crimes that I heard him tell about in the close association we had in the chicken feed cars.

Robert had been a bootlegger during the best years of that business back in prohibition days. He had a series of stills back in the tributaries of the Ochlocknee River and was so slick that not only did he not get caught but managed to employ a good many folks and expand his business... "Had a still on every creek," said he. My family owns a good little bit of the land of the Ochlocknee drainage system. "Hell, bov. we had them all over y' allses

The Chickenfeed Boat

By Robb White



The Grumman with the kids and their father fishing: That is my boat and those little children without PFDs are my grandchildren. That's my pond and that PFD business is my business. That's your worm, though, if you want him. I know he is dirty, but you can wipe your hands on your shirt after you get him on your hook.

place... yo granddaddy was my best customer," said Robert. My grandfather was already dead by then so I never got a chance to find out all about it but he was a fearsome bad alcoholic and never had to do without. He was the most wonderful man but that is another story.

Another thing about Robert... he was in the train wreck when the shaky trestle over the Ochlocknee River at Hadley Ferry broke down and the sawmill train fell in the river and scalded all those men to death in 1925. He was the fireman in the engine and ought to have been the first one to die but he dove under the water and, though the concussion of the implosion made him bleed out the ears, he was the only survivor of the whole crew... had to walk twenty miles to tell the news and nobody believed him because he was just a (...) (I ain't going to say that word because my Momma taught me not to).

So I tried to help Robert unload that chicken feed for free for a long time. I was too light to handle the damned hand trucks on the steep ramp. I helped load and trotted down behind Robert to help stack the bags but I could see that I would never be able to carry my end unless I could get to where I could get down the ramp without letting the load get away from me. I tried half loading but Robert said, "Boy, you kinda getting in my way with all that." One day (this mess went on seven days a week) Robert had to go to Memphis on business and sent his nephew to take his place. The very first thing that happened was that the nephew let the hand truck get loose from him on the ramp and busted open about eight paper bags of feed. I said, "Boy, you kinda gettin' in my way with all that."

It took me from then until car moving time at 9:00 the next morning (about 26 hours) to unload that boxcar but I did it... fifteen bucks.. big money. I don't remember what all I had to do that time, but I finally evolved a way to brake the hand truck with, first my

shoes and then two pieces of flat belt that I riveted around the axle and stood on to drag on the ramp to slow the buggy down a little. Pretty soon I was able to ride the truck down the ramp, steering with my "brakes" sort of like a hot-shot skateboard kid these days. Robert and I teamed up. He loaded his buggy while I rode mine down and dumped it at the bottom, then I would hurry back up the ramp with the empty buggy and get the next load. After the car was empty, we would double-team stacking the sacks down in the warehouse.

Piecework in the face of poverty will make an efficiency expert out of most anyone and Robert and I made some pretty good money, enough for me to order a new Grumman Sport Boat and buy a second-hand, 3 hp, 2-cylinder, Evinrude Weedless Three.

We both lost our jobs at the same time over oyster shell supplement. At that time, ground oyster shells were either mixed with chicken feed or fed separately. A train car loaded with oyster shell was a bitch. Though the flimsy paper bags were much smaller than a fifty pound bag of feed, they weighed 90 pounds and the car waiting on the siding was just as full as it could be. It was real hard to even pinch any oyster shell car up to the dock and it was almost impossible to beat the demurrage deadline, no matter how bad we busted our asses. I am afraid that I was the one who fessed up at the "Chicken King" about it and cost us our jobs (which were eagerly taken up by lesser men who had to work late into the night even with carloads of straight laying mash).

I felt guilty and told Robert. "Unloading chicken feed ain't all I know to do," he said and I think he went into the rooster fighting business with some Cubans down around Miami, but that's just a supposition. He is still alive. In fact, he is the one I get my gardening advice from. He told me to go ahead and set out my tomato and pepper plants after the new moon of February 5th.

"Dang, Robert ain't that mighty early?" said me.

"Naw, it's all over. You might have to cover them up with a sheet one or two times but they need to be in the ground with that hot manure," said he. I noticed the last time I passed his place that his were even bigger than mine. I think it might have something to do with all them roosters in those little cages behind his house.

Grumman Sport Boats are no longer built because (somebody told me) it was impractical to put flotation high enough up so that a sunk boat would pass the test and stay right side up with the engine that it was rated for (6hp) perched up on that flat-topped transom and five people sitting bolt upright on the seats. I saw one that had plastic doohickeys along the sides in an effort to comply, but that was a long time ago. Though mine is an antique (44 years old) it has enough flotation to hold up the engine, people and the picnic too, of course, the people would probably have to get out of the boat.

There is a long, useless foredeck with a bunch of some kind of primitive foam bulkheaded up under it (I think it is still in there) and the whole stern thwart (Sport Boats have three regular seats) is boxed in with foam. That's a case where they regulated out a good thing. I don't know but I bet there have been fewer people drowned in Grumman Sport Boats than there have been strangled to death

with the prize in boxes of Cracker Jacks. All the people I have ever seen with one of those boats did not look like the kind that normally fool around and drown themselves.

A Grumman boat is fifteen feet eight inches long by fifty four inches wide (not counting the damned bush catching outboard oar lock sockets). The transom is thirty two inches wide which separates it completely from a "square stern canoe". It is made with a good tumblehome to the stern which makes the boat paddle about like a canoe, actually better with only one person than a standard seventeen foot Grumman canoe.

You'll know why canoes have tumblehome after you have paddled one of those straight sided fiberglass monstrosities of the seventies all day long. It is impossible to pull a tumblehome boat out of a one-piece mold and paddling one that you can pop out will get you right between the shoulder blades from having to reach so far out to clear the rail. Though I have paddled my boat many a mile, such is not the best propulsion method. A Grumman Sport Boat is a rowboat with few peers. You have to get mighty fancy to beat one with anything that short and wide (why, when I was thirty years old...).

I like eight and a half foot oars and my extra high homemade aluminum oar locks (don't use bronze). I learned a lot about rowboats trying to improve on that boat all these years. It ain't the shape of the front of the hull and certainly not anything to do with all those rivet stumps sticking out of that extruded "T" beam keel that makes the boat row so well, it is the fact that it has almost no rocker to the bottom and a planing boat stern.

Despite what I always thought, the stern of a displacement boat does not have to stick up any higher out of the water than necessary to clear the stern wave at the speed you are going to be able to make with the load you intend to carry. The Whitehall transom sits up so high because the man who was doing the work knew he was going to have a boat load on the way to and from the whorehouse. When I'm pulling in the stern station of my old boat, all by myself (no matter where I'm going) the transom trims about half an inch in the water at rest which is a "no, no". You can "no, no" all you want to but you better save your breath if you intend to pull up far enough to see how she trims when underway without having to crank your neck (When I was 30 years old).

I finally figured it out. A Grumman Sport Boat hardly pitches at all when rowed hard. The little drag the transom makes when slightly immersed as the boat tries to squat at the beginning of the stroke is offset by its steadying influence. I think that pitching makes the wavelength of the bow and stern wave longer and the amplitude higher than what is normal for a non-pitching boat running at hull speed. The net effect of pitching in a rowboat is to make it act like it has a shorter waterline length than it actually does and is going faster than it actually is.

Now, all my rowboats have a good wide transom close to the water but it took a long time to get it right. Which, I wish I could build one for something like the Blackburn Challenge but getting back to the original problem, it costs a lot of money to outrun a Grumman Sport Boat and the folks that are still strong enough to pull hard for that long can't afford the boat. Oh well.

The other obvious thing that makes the



The varnished boat with the old Weedless Three is my first successful improvement over a Grumman Sport Boat. It has about the same weight and dimensions except it is sixteen feet long on the water. It will plane well with that Weedless Three and is a good sea boat. It is the pride and joy of its owner who has successfully maintained that all-over varnish job for many years.

boat run so well is that it is sort of light. Mine weighs a hundred and ten pounds. There is a lot of erroneous lore about boats and one is that old foolishness about how a heavy rowboat carries its way better and that is supposed to offset the fact that you have to move all that extra displaced water out of that way. If heavy boats rowed better, it would be possible to win races with a lot less money. As for me, I ain't ever had any boat that I wished weighed another pound.

Another lesson I learned from my old chickenfeed boat is that boats that are light, narrow and easily driven at displacement speeds will plane most efficiently too. My old aluminum boat will plane two grown people with a Weedless Three. I don't know any other production boat that will do that. With one person and a long tiller extension my boat will run 11 knots with that old fifties engine. The transition from displacement to planing is so subtle that it is impossible, without leaning over the transom to tell when it happens. There is never any wake. I figured that out too.

What happens is that the boat begins to plane before it gets to its hull speed so it never makes enough disturbance in the water to have to climb any bow wave or tear away from any stern wave to get going. I have built a bunch of boats that run that way and I believe that sixteen feet on the water is about the minimum. With boats that are borderline too short (like the Grumman) you have to make sure that you trim by the bow so you get all you can get of hull speed. That leads us into the problem section.

A Grumman Sport Boat is not ideal. It has about the same bow shape at the bottom as an aluminum canoe... no deadrise... almost flat. That makes it, not only wet, but pound bad. My old boat will slap even the lightest chop hard enough to knock the oxide dust loose to blow back in my eyes (along with the

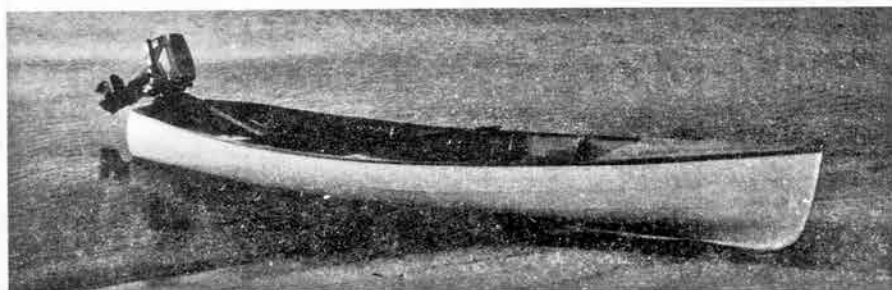
spray). Even at low speed.... rowing... the boat pounds and throws water in a chop. That makes it unpleasant in anything but smooth water.

It is dangerous in rough conditions. If you trim it by the bow like you need to do to ease off on the pounding and get any practical displacement speed, it will root into the back of a following sea or one of those big, almost stationary waves that you find at inlets and river mouths on a falling tide. I don't think it would take much misjudgement to root one of them bad enough to broach around and turn over and drown somebody. If you don't trim by the bow, the damn thing will not go to windward if it is even a little bit rough. It will pound so bad that you can't stand it and stick its bow up so high that you won't be able to hold it into the wind. About the only thing you can do when it breezes up is get back in the stem and go downwind. A Grumman Sport Boat ain't no sea boat.

I'll tell you this though. Mine stays in use, the bottom is shiny from pushing through so many lily pads and acres of grass. There is no telling what it would read on the hour meter if it had one. It will go right in the back of a pickup truck and we can snatch it out and be long gone before the bass boat crowd gets through discussing the necessity of being able to go seventy mph (statute) up the river. They won't ever see us when they finally get fired up because we will have dragged old "Chickenfeed" over into some virgin slough somewhere and will already have two or three big red bellies that have never seen a metal flake in their lives.

Whooee... Dang, let me put this computer down, I already had to pull the boat out of the bushes so I could measure it to set down the facts, might as well just slide her on in the truck... might go see if old Robert wants to go, he got them big black wigglers all around under his rooster cages.

The white boat pulled up on the beach is the best Sport Boat imitation so far.... same dimensions except 16' w/ and it even has the big, useless foredeck. The best part is that it weighs less than 80 pounds... a delightful little boat. I wish I had it back.



I have been trying for 42 years to compete in the skiffboat business with aluminum and fiberglass and the only way I can do it is to build a better boat and, with some boats, that is kind of hard to do.

One of the best skiffboats ever made was the old aluminum Grumman Sport Boat. Among some of us it is a cult object. I don't feel comfortable on a frosty, early spring morning unless my ass is sitting on that freezing aluminum seat and my feet are exactly the same temperature as the water. It is nearly a 50-year-old tradition with me to fish the fresh water in the early spring in my old aluminum boat. Normally it stays pulled up, turned upside down, in a little live oak cove down at our old, big, swampy pond.

One spring I took my grandchildren to do a little messing and we saw some small alligators that had been hatched the spring before. I carefully poled the old boat as close as I could in the weedy shallows and, when the little alligators submerged (they back down), I jumped out and made a cold splashing, high stepping gallop and caught two of them, one in each hand. Boy, that old Grumman has been "The Alligator Boat" ever since.

What I am trying to say is that a good boat is a valuable thing and the longer you have it, the more valuable it gets, particularly when you start to get old. You don't want them to do like an old dog and leave you before you get tired of them. I know I'll get to the day when I won't be able to make an early spring fishing trip in my old aluminum boat, but I'll certainly fight it 'til the bitter end. Them alligators better keep on their toes because, even when I am too old to trot, my grandchildren will be perfectly capable of the cold splashing, high stepping gallop and they'll have just the boat to make the initial approach.

Guess what? I don't know all the ins and outs of it, but you can, now, after many years of regulatory and corporate nonsense, buy a brand new Grumman Sport Boat built in the same factory in Marathon, New York. Does that put me out of the skiffboat business? Nope. I can build a better sport boat than Grumman can. Though the Grumman is a mighty fine little skiff and dear to my heart, it ain't is good as it could be, too heavy for one thing, ain't marine grade aluminum for another, and it has an aluminum canoe bow which pounds and splashes.

You know, a man's relationship with women is sort of like that. By the time you realize that your true love has a slight imperfection here or there, you are too old to attract up any of these other objects of perfection on display. Besides, by the time you have had enough experience to notice any irregularity, you have gotten too fond of the damned thing to get rid of it. Of course, a man can have more than one pretty good boat.

So I am, right now, building me an improved Grumman Sport Boat. I think any capable amateur could do it, too, and I want to find out exactly what it would take so I am going at it like I was an amateur and am not going to use anything that is not available to anybody. It'll be strip planked out of store bought, old growth Atlantic white cedar. I paid \$38 for the lumber and am already well into the project. I took the boards (actually fitches) to a cabinet shop and got them planed to a uniform (?) thickness. I ought to have

Grumman Sport Boat Improvement Project

By Robb White



done it myself on my own sharp planer, but I am trying to play like I am an amateur. The people at the cabinet shop refused to let me pay them for doing the job, but I put down \$20 in the project book.

I ripped the strips with a skillsaw (I super glued a little fence on the bottom) and one of Dave Carnell's blades, works wonderfully, except that I had to move the operation outside because, whoooo, that cedar dust in a small shop will assault the nostrils most amazingly and I haven't figured out how to hook up the dust sucker to the skillsaw quite yet. Besides, most amateurs wouldn't have a dust sucker. There was a brief delay because, finally, we are getting a little rain which would wet the wood so I had to knock off and take the old Grumman and go fishing. I can't rip strips in the rain but I do have a slicky suit and a Bert Dow hat. I am going to keep up with all the expenses and the time for the whole project and I'll keep you posted. We'll find out exactly how much a capable amateur can build a real good little skiffboat for.

I heard that. Somebody said, "No matter what kind of erroneous drivel you spew out, you, Robb White, opinionated fool that you are, are not actually an amateur and so your damned experiment is not going to be valid." I realize that. My son Sam is going to build the boat. He is a capable man but has never built a boat in his life. Right now he is sort of intermittent with various freelance, high tech related jobs so that he can keep his little one-year-old daughter out of the wretched, yuppie driven day care system while his good wife brings in the bacon.

How it will work is that I'll keep the girl and he'll build the boat. Of course, I'll have to pay him good money because he is not like most amateurs who think their time is worthless, but then again, he'll have to pay me good money for the day care. If I can work it right, it'll be about an even trade. I think most wood skiffboat builders make about the same thing as most daycare workers, if they make anything at all.

So, how will I keep my big deal, opinionated, professional self from supervising Sam while he is building the boat (so as to keep this experiment perfectly valid)? I'll take that little girl fishing. I've already ordered her a Bert Dow hat from Hamilton Marine. You know nothing will set up a child for a life-

time of adventure like an early exposure to excitement and the cold drizzle of early spring rain. Maybe she'll turn out like my wife and be sort of nonstandard. I'll leave this new juniper boat to her in my will. She'll remember that her daddy built it while she was fishing. Of course, I'll try to wear it out first. Of course, she will want the old aluminum boat, too.

Oh, yeah, if I keep this project pure, I won't be able to use my beloved shaper and power feed to edge the beads and coves on the strips. I could (Sam could) easily and quickly edge them by hand with the two little planes that I made to edge all those damned stealers I had to put in the Rescue Minor to make all those wild convolutions in that complicated hull. I mean, you know, to bead and cove a 1/4" strip ain't all that big of a deal. I could even bevel the strips by hand like I used to do back when I was discovering that building strip planked boats by the old standard method was unprofitable.

I don't know if the cute little planes are within the capability of the average amateur or not, so I am going to take a different tack but it is going to hurt me. I do not like a router and don't even own one. It is not that I am ignorant of the damned things, hell, I bet I have routed out more sink holes in flakeboard countertops and more window holes in aluminum and lauan plywood on the sides of house trailers than any other boatbuilder in this country.



I know that a lot of y'all watch Norm, the New Yankee, on the TV and marvel when he says, "Now, it's time for my rowta," and takes the cursed thing (did you notice how they turn down the sound for the actual routing just like they turn it up for the commercials) and work a minor miracle on some valuable project. Of course the "rowta" is already set up and a trial run made several times or else the whole show would be taken up by cussing and fooling around. A router is a trailer factory tool, a gimmick for those unwilling to learn a little skill. The only reason Norm is pushing them so hard is because the router salesmen, let me stop right here.

Whew, all that was to set the scene for a new invention my son Sam and I are working on. It'll be a homemade strip edging rig

that any capable person can make for himself and, get this, it'll do the bead and cove on the strip in one pass. Of course it'll take two routers to do it, but it won't take but the cheapest kind of the damned things. I'll include the money for the two routers and the bits in the overall cost of the project, but I won't add up the development time because I will give the world that knowledge as soon as we get it figured out.

As far as figuring things out goes, I am going to deviate completely from this whole theme. I was gossiping down at the bait store with some other fishermen who were watching to see if the downpour would ever taper off into a cold, all day drizzle so we could go fishing, and we figured out what we need to do to avoid this pitiful war we are looking at.

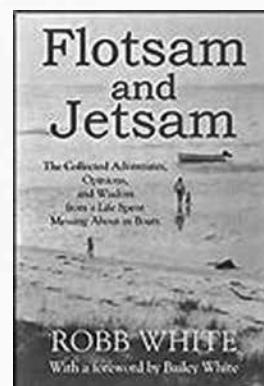
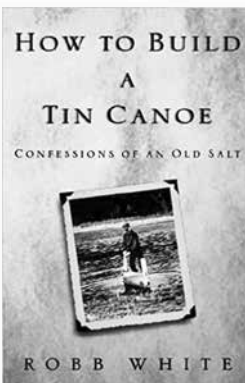
You know they just shipped out the whole 148th Transportation Squad from Thomasville. I know a bunch of those people. They are not actually a lean, mean fighting machine but just some folks who were trying to supplement their financial situation by going to meetings with their camouflage suited friends. They understood when they signed up that they might have to win a war in defense of this country but, you know, except for the Cuban Missile Crisis, I can't think of any war since WWII that actually qualified for that job description.

The whole outfit (a lot of mothers and fathers and grandparents, too) is gone. They even sent all those old trucks, some from the 1950s, over there. I tell you what, I don't like Saddam Hussein. If I had the chance, I would jump on him like a saber toothed tiger (with these false teeth) but I think there must be a better way to do this thing.

Here is the bait store proposal. We should just buy those "weapons of mass destruction." All it'd take would be an advertisement saying that we will pay big cash money for any little vial of germs or poison or any radioactive particle or any mobile, hideous weapons factory. I bet anything that a truck driver would say to himself (no chance that it would be "herself" in that wretched place), "Hell, man, I'm driving ten million bucks. Give me 40 acres and I'll turn this rig around." We wouldn't even have to burden the taxpayers. We could just charge an entry fee for any Liberian or Panamanian tanker. "So the gas would go up," you say, "and that would burden the taxpayers." Yep, but it is going up anyway and looking at the evidence on the roads and waterways, it ain't near high enough yet. The citizens don't have to buy all that gas but they do have to pay the taxes, unless they ain't making any money, which brings us back to the beginning of this circle.

Postscript

When I write something, I let it ferment for a week or two (at least) before I send it off for consideration for publication. That way, if I made a mistake, I can correct it. As you can guess, most stories go off in their original condition, but not this time. I made a mistake. I'll be damned if I'll drive to the big city to the Home Depot or Lowes or call up any of these 50 pounds of catalogs I get every month and buy a router, let alone two of the disgusting things so as to do something that doesn't take as much horsepower as sharpening a pencil. I'll hollow and round these strips with my tiny hand planes, as a matter of fact, Sam is almost through already. It is not good to encourage consumerism, helplessness, and waste. I'll show you exactly how to make a set of the little planes for yourself. Ain't nothing to it and they work wonderfully.



Rugged. Beautiful.

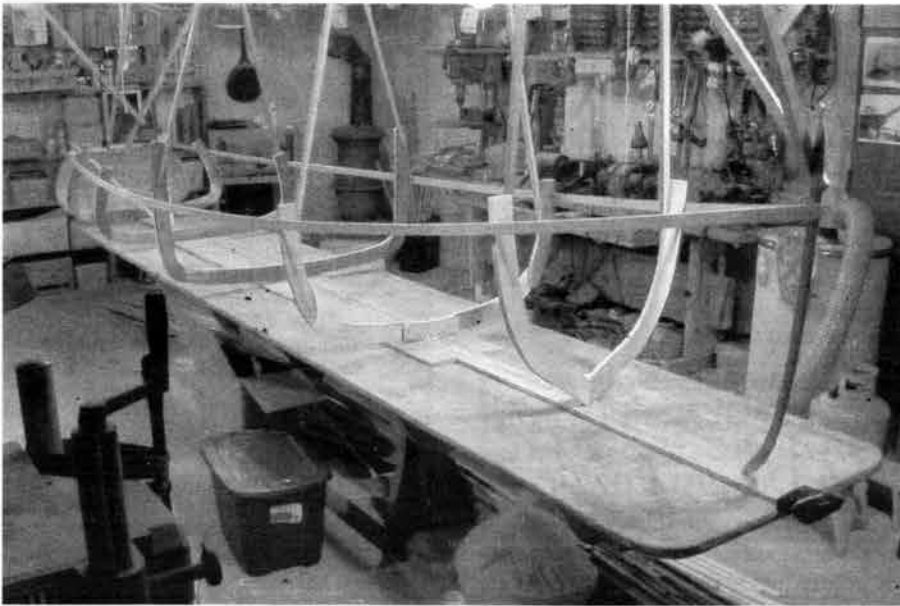


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Well, the first step is to get the boat in your mind's eye. My oldest son is building me a strip planked, eyeball copy of my old Grumman Sport Boat, *Chickenfeed*. He spent forty years around that boat so he knows what looks like. He has never built a boat before, nor has he designed one, but he is one of those kind of people who is confident that he can do anything anybody else can do (and he has seen me do it and knows that I am not nearly as smart as he is so he is forging ahead).

What I told him was that I wanted a boat exactly the same size as old *Chickenfeed*, but a little harder in the bilges by the stern, so as to plane better, and with a little hollow to the forefoot, and a little more deadrise forward, so as not to pound as bad, and with no rocker to the bottom, and with a little "throwdown" hook to the stern ahead of the transom to keep the boat from squatting when it begins to plane off. Despite those changes, I told him that I wanted the improved boat to look enough like the old one that it would seem familiar to us. He understood perfectly and had the boat designed and molded out with the stem and transom and sheer strakes (strips) set up in half a day.

Fortunately he is going to have to take a few days off so the freshly designed boat can sit there and ferment a while so when he (and I) go back in there to look, it will be as if we are seeing it for the first time. If it still looks good, we'll know that it really does, and we aren't just jaded by too much looking. I always do that. Impetuosity is not a good trick. That's why I don't like to talk on the phone... apt to make a bigger fool of myself than if I let something I wrote sit and stew for a day or two.

Here is how he did it: He traced the transom of the old Grumman and modified the tracing so that the bilges were a little harder. All he had to do was to draw a shorter radius right at the bottom corners. Then he measured the midsection of the old aluminum boat and drew a full sized half frame with approximately the same arc to the bottom and radius to the bilge as his new transom. The midship frame looks just about like the middle of the Grumman at the widest point. He measured the stem height in the driving rain

Grumman Sport Boat Improvement Project

How to Eyeball Design a Boat

By Robb White

(using the soggy ground as a baseline) and eyeball cut a temporary inner stem and set it up, along with the middle mold and the transom, on a board bent to incorporate the throwdown at the stern and the straight rockerless keel of the new boat. He braced all that rigidly to the ceiling of the shop with sticks and fastened on the two strips which will make the sheer strakes of the boat and propped them so that they ran enough like the sheer of the old Grumman to look familiar.

It is uncanny how precise the eyeball is when it comes to the sheer of a boat. It is easy to see a quarter inch worth of wrongness. I had to go take a look while he was fiddling with that and he already had it exactly right. As a matter of fact, he eyeballed both sides separately and there wasn't a quarter inch

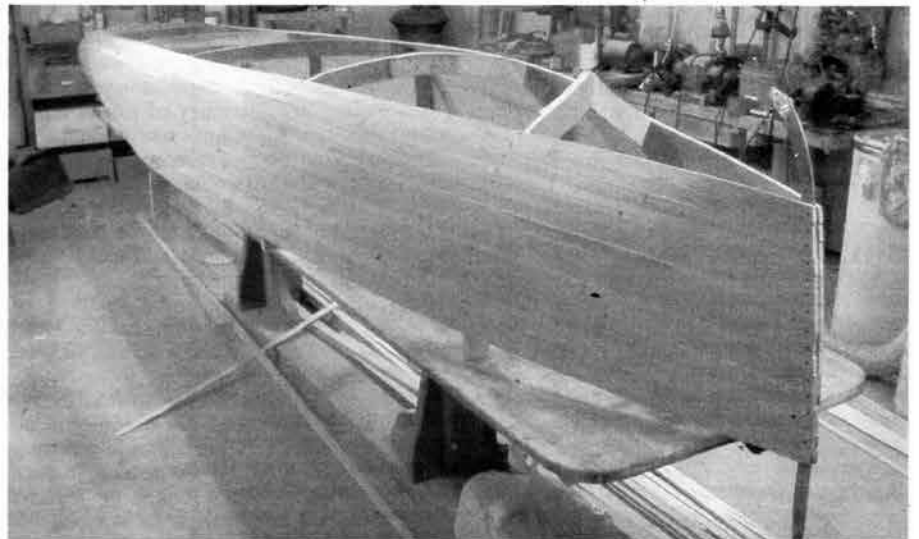
difference in the measured height from the baseline anywhere along either side.

Between the rigidly fixed midship mold and the stem and transom are some eyeball bent copper wires to represent the other molds. Normally, with a lap strake boat, I just use prop sticks to hold the planks where I want them and don't use any molds at all because the planks bend so fairly that I don't need them, but I do set up those wires to start with to give me something to measure along to get my plank widths at each station. With a strip planked boat, the strips are so limp that you need molds to hold them fair, so when old son comes back, he will replace all those wires with wood molds and the new molds will be beveled just like frames so the clamps won't pull any unfairness into the limber strips.

Notice that the middle mold is built just like a single sawn frame with futtocks of equal width instead of just having the outer curve cut onto a straight sided board. That is so he won't have to readjust the clamps he'll use to hold his strips as he planks down. He'll use clamps instead of screwing the strips to the molds. That way he can go back and slide the strip fore or aft to make it lie fair and get right with the other strip. If you screw strips to the molds, you'll wind up with so many screw holes from fooling around that it might weaken the boat at each mold station.

Old Sam has some computer project going with a building contractor. He does it all from his home computer so he doesn't have to travel all over the place with the baby, but he doesn't have much time right now for the new boat. He has it all planked up, though, and the two shaped garboard strakes, which kept us from having to taper strips, are finished but not put in yet. The boat is very fair and smooth. I don't think it will take anything but a little scraping to get the outside ready for the fiberglass job and, like the *Rescue Minor*, no sanding or anything on the inside.

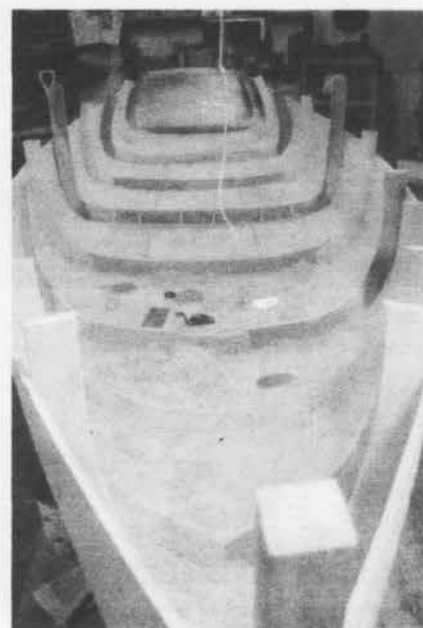
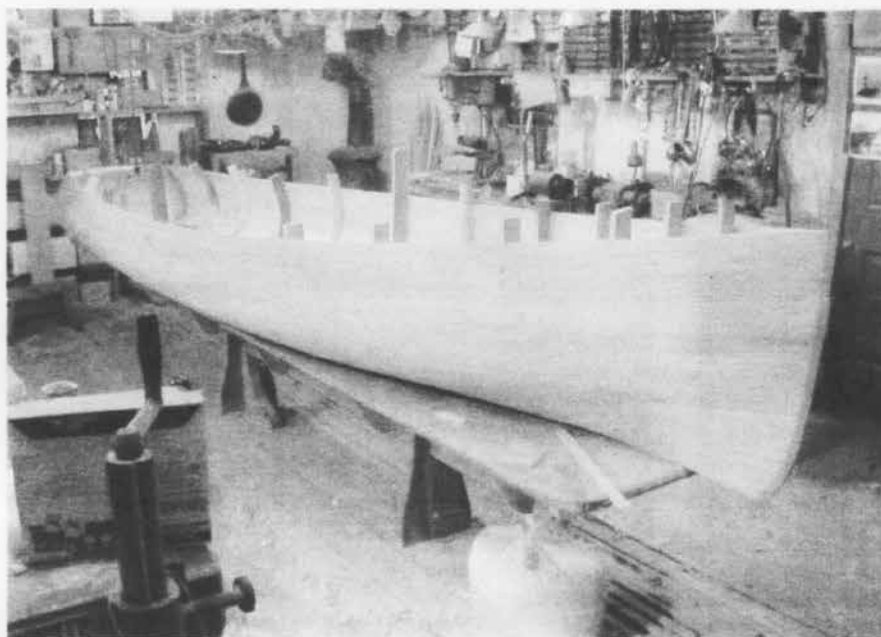
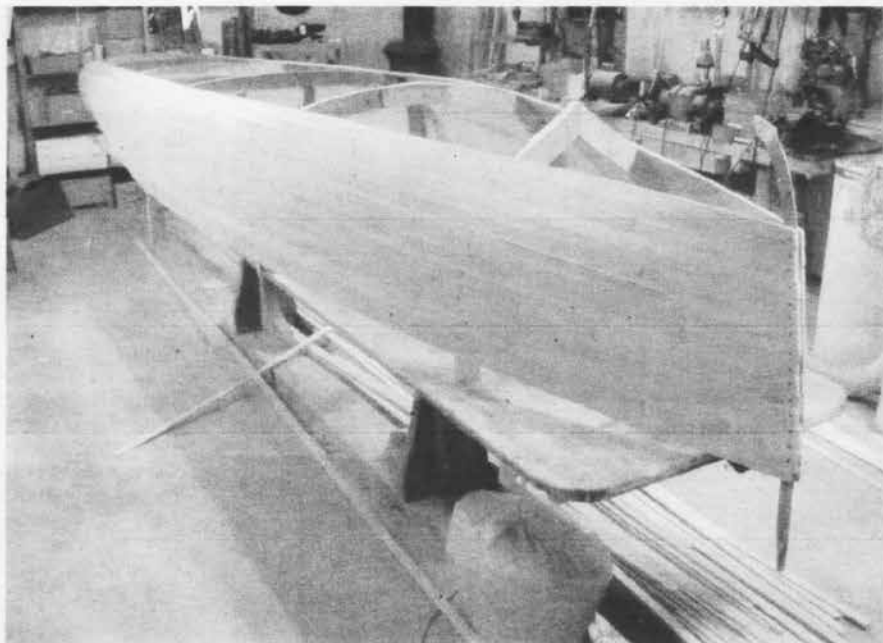
There are 48 strips in the boat and the average layup time figures out to 4 strips every 45 minutes. That's a pretty quick way to get a boat hull. I bet stitch and glue isn't all that much faster. This boat is much easier to plank than the *Rescue Minor* and I didn't keep up with my time on that project but the "super glue" strip planking method is real quick and neat. We used \$18 worth so far.



Grumman Sport Boat Improvement Project Update

By Robb White

Sam is moving sort of slow on the sport boat job. It ain't just the baby who is turning out to be a regular handful but he has some kind of internet project going that I didn't pay enough attention to the explanation of to remember what it was. He has the boat all planked up and is scraping the inside in preparation for epoxifying it enough to take the molds out to finish the gluing up so he can turn it over and plane and scrape the outside. The boat is very fair and I believe we could have gotten away with thinner strips, but that cedar is so light that it won't make a bit of difference. Anyway, scraping is hard work and it'll get you in the hands mighty quick. About the best thing to do when that happens is to do a little typing and I think that's what he is doing. And....



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It has been going slow. For one thing, old Sam has been busy with more important projects (that redheaded baby is a handful for one thing) and, because I am determined to maintain the purity of this experiment, I have had to spend a lot of time at the coast and fooling around on the rivers and lakes so as not to go into the shop and hit a little lick on the boat myself. The status at the present time (middle of May) is that the complete hull of the boat is sitting in there on the bench with all the molds still in there.

It is all tacked up with super glue and the planking has been scraped inside and out so that the edges of the strips can't be felt, but the hull has not been planed fair and, except for gluing on the outer stem, nothing has been epoxified. Though the boat is very fair and smooth and could probably just be epoxified and fiberglassed as it is and come out alright, it is possible to feel a few little places where there is a slight dip in the planking (nothing over 1/32"). I had a world of those kinds of places on the Rescue Minor and I devised a little trick to pull them out so I wouldn't have to plane the planking down any thinner than necessary to get the hull smooth enough to suit any prissy pants observer.

Another Update... Grumman Sport Boat Improvement Project

By Robb White

Since the inside is epoxified first and that glues the planking in rigid alignment forever, I screwed little scabs to the outside from the inside to pull the little dips in the planking out even. I cut little crescent shaped pieces of wood to fit the place where I could feel a little dip and drove one screw (5/8" #4, square drive from McFeely) through the planking into the hollow of the crescent. Because the crescent tapered toward the ends, there was enough of a spring so that the ends of the little scab did not distort the planking either side of the dip. I tried to cut the inside curve of the scab a little too curved so I could adjust, by feel, as I tightened up on the screw. It is a quick and good working way to fair the hull so you don't have to carve the whole boat down to a few little low places.

Sam did the whole port side in one hour. That's only seven scabs and I could have done it in 10 minutes, but Sam is a nitpicker. Back

when we went on all night model airplane building binges, Wes and I would be outside winding up the rubber band before the dew was off the grass, but Sam would still be in there with the glue fumes gluing the little bumps on the cowl of the Monocoupe. There are at least two of those scabs on the port side of this boat that I think are superfluous. I tried to tell him that we ain't trying to make no "Picnic Boat" here, but he just said, "Sit down, son. Just who the hell do you think is robbing this train anyway?"

Anyway, I learned the hard way to put some tape on those scabs so when the glue is squeezed all inside the hot planking of the boat and capillary action works its wonders, the epoxy won't work its wonderful way under all those scabs so you have to carve them off the boat. My grandchildren are coming this afternoon and they'll punch out little circles of tape with a hole puncher and cover the screws so Sam can get them out. I have six grandchildren and seven screws, so I guess it'll all work out. They fit into the category of "skillful amateur" so, as long as they are on the clock, the validity of this experiment will remain pure.

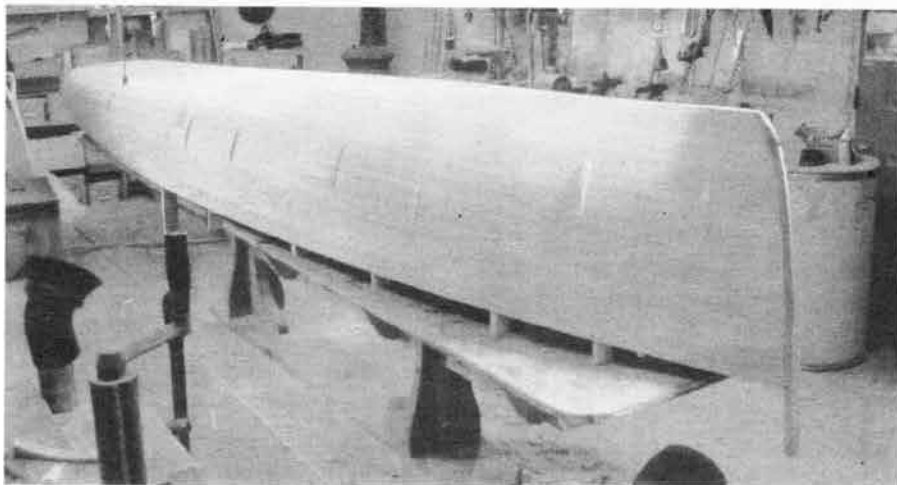
An aside: You know, it is easy to make assumptions when you get old. You assume that everybody knows the same things that everybody knew back when you were young and are apt to forget that there are young people who might not have appreciated the value of old lore enough to have properly perpetuated it, so I'll tell you the old train robbing joke in case you are young and ignorant.

Back in the olden days there were these things called passenger trains. They were pulled by locomotives and the man driving it was called a locomotive engineer (a dignified job title if there ever was one. I would much rather be called a locomotive engineer than a CEO). Unlike freight trains, which lumbered across the countryside, going slow so the hobos could get on and off easy, passenger trains hauled ass so the robbers couldn't get on and rob the passengers. They had names like *The City of New Orleans* and riding on such as that before the advance of civilization relegated them into obsolescence was a pretty good trip.

I guess masochism is more common than anybody realized. I know I would heap rather go to the dining car and eat a porterhouse steak and then to the bar car and have me a little toddy and then go down to my Pullman and get in my little bed to be rocked to sleep by the rhythm of the rails, goodnight *City of New Orleans*, than I would squat in a wretched airport eating out of vending machines and sleeping in a hard plastic chair that smells like disgruntlement. That's progress, y'all. Man, people love to wallow in their own stupidity, don't they?

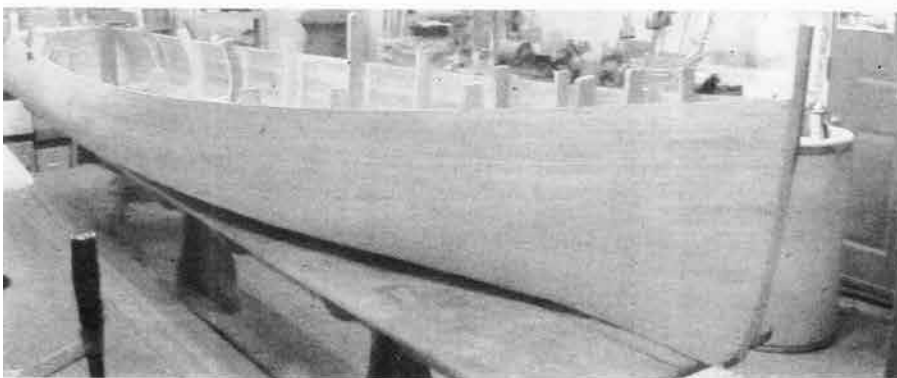
Damn, I got aside of my aside. Anyway, somehow the train robber got on the train and stood up in front of the car with his big pistol and declared that he was going to rob all the men and screw all the women. With that, a brave passenger (someone like the heroes of the Pennsylvania 9/11 crash, I guess) stood up with his big pistol and said, "You, sir, may very well rob all the men, but you'll only touch these women over my dead body."

"Sit your narrow ass down, son," declared an old lady passenger. "Who the hell you think is robbing this train anyway?"



Upside down: The next step is to epoxify the inside of the hull between the molds. Then Sam can take off those little scabs and the planking will stay straight without them.

Right side up: The epoxy has been applied between the molds, the scabs are off, and now he'll take the molds out and scrape the places where they were fair and smooth and fix the screw holes and epoxify those places. The next step is to fair and fiberglass the outside of the hull. The reason to fiberglass the outside first is you want that to come out smooth, but you can use the scraps from that to do the inside where it doesn't need to be so perfect. We will put fiberglass on the bare wood. That works very well and eliminates a lot of sanding of epoxy. You just have to be careful to keep applying epoxy and heating until the wood has soaked up all it can hold.



Grumman Sport Boat Improvement Project Sea Trials

By Robb White

Well, we launched the strip planked sport boat son Sam built. The poor boy (40 years old) had some kind of intestinal virus and missed the whole show. It was just Jane and me. Sam and I finished the finishing touches yesterday before he got sick and Jane and I carried the little boat out the door and put her on the trailer early this morning. During the night another cold front came through (and this April 14!) and it was 40 degrees and blowing NW a steady 25 knots with gusts to 35. Whew, it like to have taken the boat away from us when we got out of the lee of the shop but we made it.

I had already readied the old Martin 60 (National Pressure Cooker Company, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, 1946) and had made a few improvements in it, too. I'll cover them right now so you'll know what to expect. One improvement was that I fitted a little bronze three-blade propeller to replace the excellent two-blade weedless aluminum wheel that came standard. The bronze prop is higher pitched and the blades are sharper and better formed for efficiency. The reason I did it was that, with the weedless prop, the old Grumman wouldn't plane out flat enough to suit me. The new prop made a world of difference.

Another improvement was that I modified the little gas shut-off valve so that it actually shuts off the gas. You know back in the olden days they just had a metal to metal valve and there is no metal to metal fit that will shut off gasoline, so I took it apart and machined the innards to it so that it shuts off with an "O" ring and now when I run the carburetor empty, dammit, it stays empty. I am fixing to fix the metal to metal float needle and seat in the carburetor and the vent screw on the gas cap as soon as I get around to it, too. Then the old engine will be just as gas tight as a Honda. Before I did all that, you couldn't tilt the engine for more than ten minutes or it would go to stinking and dripping gas in the boat. The stench of outboard motor gas used to thrill me but not anymore. But I do like the way a Martin runs and intend to keep on running the old thing as long as I can.

The little boat looked pretty good on the trailer. You know you can't actually tell how a boat looks when it is in a little shop. It takes the sun and shade to show the true facts. We tied her down and got our junk together and hauled her 15 miles to Lake Iamonia. It was blowing so hard across the highway that I was afraid it would blow that light little rig sideways but, though it rocked pretty good in the gusts, it was roadworthy and we were soon ready to launch. There was no ceremony to it. Jane took hold of the painter and I slid her off. The little boat looked better in the water than it did on the trailer and that's the way it ought to be. "Old New" is that same way and the "Rescue Minor" is sort of funny looking



That's a Trail Ex UT200 trailer, came on the UPS truck.



Lake Iamonia boat ramp 15 miles from the shop. We have launched a bunch of boats here, that's Jane as usual.

Running at about 10 knots, couldn't take a picture running wide open.





Easing along in the chop. There are Indian artifacts all over that little island.

Yep, she planes!



on the trailer but looks good in the water. Anyway, we didn't waste any time. I parked the car while Jane loaded up the life preservers and stuff and we were soon under way.

We found out immediately that it was a good boat. For one thing, it did not pound in the chop of the lake and it held its bow up into the wind much better than the Grumman which is squirrely and hard to handle in a good breeze and impossible in 25 knots like today, but this boat idled out the channel through the lily pads without trying to blow off sideways at all.

When the engine got warmed up I opened the throttle. Goodness gracious, what a surprise. That thing is about a Class "A" runabout compared to the Grumman. I did not have my GPS and it is hard to estimate the speed of a new boat until you have had some experience with it but it is a hell of a lot faster than the old aluminum boat. The boat is a good bit lighter than the Grumman (100 lbs. vs. 135 lbs.) but I think the main difference is the rockerless bottom and the 1/2" of throw down at the transom. It begins to plane at what I think is 3.5 knots...well below hull speed...so the transition is undetectable as I expected.

When we got out in the lake where it was rough, that's when the real difference showed up. The boat did not pound at all, it runs with the forefoot in the water at any speed below wide open. We ran it in that pretty stiff chop at all speeds and it never pounded at all, but it did throw spray running wide open which is expected. The boat was perfectly dry running slow. Any boat small enough to have a short shaft engine mounted on a flat-topped transom will wet you running 20 knots in choppy conditions. Though a little fine spray blew back into the boat, there was no solid water and no tendency to get slapped around going across the wind or against it and the boat did not try to root, yaw, and broach running downwind. Of course, these were small waves and it remains to be seen what it'll do in big waves. I expect it will be slow, but I believe it will be a good sea boat which is fortunate because Jane and I will have to get to the island in it after the Apalachicola Antique and Classic boat show at which we will win the "Antique Wood Canvas Sport Boat" category for sure.

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Meandering the Texas Coast

By Michael Beebe

I'm Not Sure

I'm not sure just what it is or how its application keeps coming back into my and other's lives, but I'll take it. Last Saturday, in the afternoon, my throat felt scratchy. Sunday morning I knew I was in for a ride, the next four days showed my observations to be correct. Wednesday brought with it the required antibiotics, yesterday I turned the corner. This morning I'm thinking of foul weather in a drysuit aboard my 12' *Red Top*. He's put back together.

He don't wear as much sail as he did years ago. I thought I might increase what he has, about 64sf, to the designed 80sf. After two sails with the old rig, a lug, I believe the new sail will be about the same size as what is being used presently.

The thing mentioned at the beginning of this tale, and taking it, the spark of life, the wonderment of a child that still resides within. I often tell my wife she has an exuberance for life. Her enthusiasm is a wonderful thing. I'm guessing that is what I'll gladly accept, humbly accept, as long as possible.

This past week, even in the midst of being a homebound old man, I'm inspired by what I read. Small boats, big adventures by your everyday Joes. Undertakings by those we rub up against who never talk of their times out and about in the world, be it on the waves, upon the water or backpacking the wilderness. I've a few more days of imposed restrictions. I'm fine with that, don't like it, but that's the way it is.

Soon enough, soon enough.

Summer Breeze

Summer Breeze, the name conjures in one's mind memories of mostly pleasant bygone days, hoped for as well to be enjoyed again. Ah, but the dusty fields tramped upon by the bare feet of ten-year-old boys growing up in rural America brings to mind the painter Rockwell. The long days of summer, spent as well on the seashore by those escaping the heat further inland. The ocean breeze of summer, cooling off the city folk along the shore brings along their own memories.

Those along the seashore often have at their disposal small sailboats. This *Summer Breeze* is one of those craft. Its length is a little under 12', 4' wide, floats in the runoff from a watered garden. Stick a sail on the thing and the boys along the shore are going places. They still are.

Built entirely of 1/4" plywood, well almost entirely. An easy build. I built one a few years ago. Took it out across Aransas Bay. Getting back had the boys of yesteryear talking. "Mike, was that you walking the shallows pulling your boat the other evening?"

Never did find out how those two fellow sailors found out about it. It was a sport fisherman who towed me in that evening. He

was the last fellow out near enough to give me a friendly tow in. He knew me, he sails a Sunfish, said the same thing happened to him a few years back while he was out on the fish. It might have been him.

I gave that *Summer Breeze* away a few years ago. Problem is, I didn't give it far enough away. It came back. Reminds me of some water jugs another sailor here in Rockport gave me. My plans for the jugs changed so I took them back to the friend. "No, no way!" he said. "Part of the deal was no returns." I should have used the same logic with the *Breeze*.

Yesterday though, the *Breeze* left again. A couple of fellows came from Port Aransas to claim their new dinghy. I'd put a free ad up on craigslist. It went fast. These boys grew up in Aransas Pass, yes, two different cities. Cousins actually. The one planning on using the dinghy as a shore boat for his Skipper 20 gave me some history.

Said his dad drowned out in the Gulf, never did find the guy. Now his son wants to sail the Gulf in memory of his pa. Then he starts talking about a 20' Flicka, his dreamboat. Tells me about a beauty of one over at Farley's Boat works. Then, pointing to his cousin's leg, said, "I'd give one of his legs for a Flicka." Laughing, I said, "He might not like the deal." These boys, cousins, have been around awhile. My guess is they are in their mid 50s.

I don't think the *Summer Breeze* will be coming back this time. Forrest said he's taking the Skipper to Florida and the *Breeze* is going along for the ride, being a shore boat.

I Had Planned

I had planned on sailing across Este's Flats and out through what I call First House Cut. Harvey took the house, all that is left are the piles and the first floor. I never made it out into Aransas Bay through the cut, had to go back another way. It was blowing pretty good, gusting to 26 NOAA said of the timeline I was out on the thin water, with the amount of wind and a good reef in the sail, the leeboards not stopping my leeway enough to give me a chance of doing it.

After scooping water three times and bailing while the leeboard kept me in position, it was that shallow, I decided to back-track the way I came and use the ICW going north to get out into the bay from Cove Harbour. As I was sailing past the Harbour entrance in front of Paradise Key Restaurant, the Highway Patrol boat came by rather fast, giving me concern for their wake, waving they'll went out a short distance into the bay and came back in, waving again. They've been out a lot lately.

I decided to sail out to the second set of channel markers, a lousy guess, maybe a lit-

tle more than a half mile. The leeboard now biting, me sitting on the rail, the wind waves threatening my little craft, it started getting to be fun. One wave caught me and threw a bunch of water aboard dousing me completely.

The boat did well. I was tethered in and only dipped the rail twice more. I might need another reef put in. I have two, the second one does not give me much upwind ability, almost none actually. I put a third grommet in up higher but that is really for downwind in different conditions.

So I'm out there, enjoying myself, and for some reason think about Howard Rice out in the waters off South America with wind at three times as much in one storm, twice as much more often and living in it. Amazing, utterly amazing.

Getting home and settling in for the evening I dig out an old SCA, the one where we are given the rundown on *Southern Cross*, Howard's boat. I'm looking for ideas, ideas that'll help me in the local stuff. I know I'm not going to South America, Aransas Bay keeps me plenty busy.

My little *Red Top* is what I have and she will fill the bill here for me. Reading articles of Rice's travels is plenty inspiring. Keeping it all in check helps when the evening gleanings offer themselves to us. I, for one, appreciate these things. I remember reading of Shackleton's *Endurance* in the winter with the wood stove burning and I sitting closely by.

Funny Stuff

March 24: Out in *Red Top*, blowing about 15 to 22. Full sail. South to first cut into Este's Flats, out near to where the first house used to be across from Taylor Island. Then into small lake south of the cut and anchored for a while. Fished, no fish. Bad on back. No wonder I don't fish. These back bays here on the Texas Coast I'm finding out are called lakes.

On the way out of Cove Harbour, House of Boats is rebuilding their dock and seawall. They have been at this job for a month now, using the skip loader to move the sand away from the repair area. Today they were using the skip with the bucket removed and added a set of forks to bring in pallets of material. They had these added forks held in place with a drive/prop shaft from a small commercial boat. Workmen on construction sites know how to adapt to their needs.

So as I'm sailing by in my dinghy, being a lifelong construction worker, how would I know that a prop shaft was exactly what they were using? The 20" prop was still attached to the one end. Funny stuff.

Island Pieces: Finishing the Top

The island's top is made from two pieces of ribbon stripe plywood and doweled maple trim. The mahogany seat back posts are secured with $\frac{5}{8}$ " brass studs.



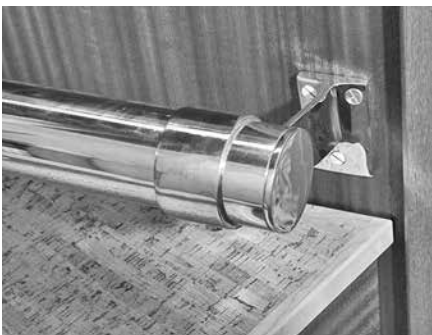
The Building of *Helge* A George Buehler Diesel Duck Part 9

Wendell Gallagher is building a Buehler Diesel Duck 38. He had the steel hull built at a yard and trucked to his home and is doing the rest himself.



Gluing a test stud (notice the twisting plywood base below).

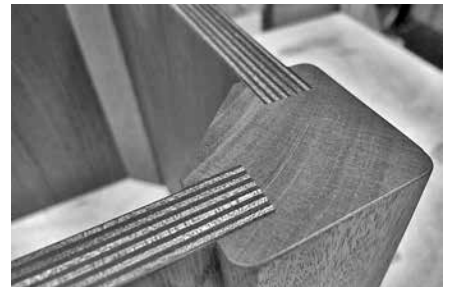
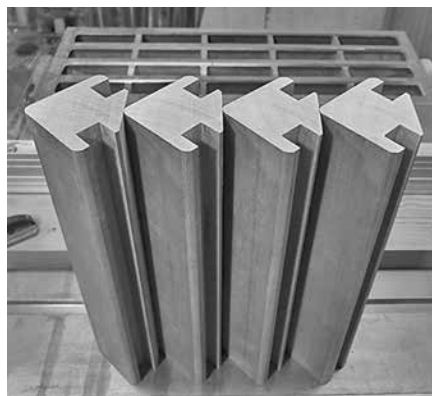




Liquor cabinet latch.

The Forward Step

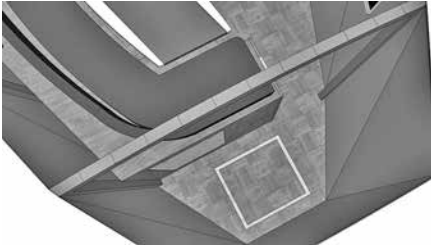
Helge's forward step will double as a toolbox/chest. The sides are rotary cut sapele plywood with an all apple core. The corner posts are mahogany and the top is bamboo. Friction hinges attach the top.



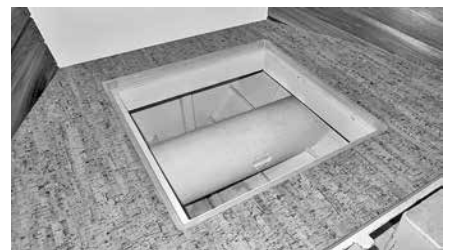
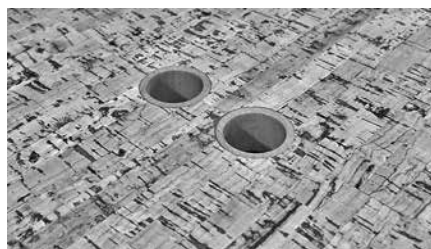
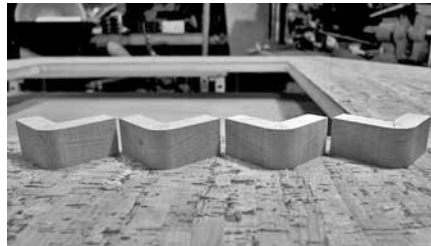
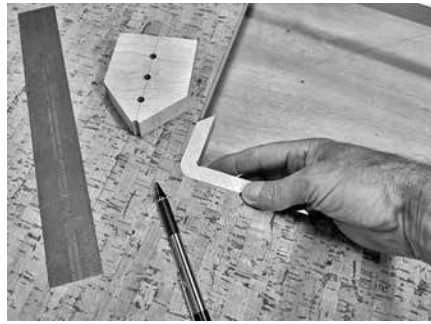
Finished with four coats of Daley's Ship'n Shore.

The Bow Thruster Hatch

Helge's forward sole is cork lined $\frac{3}{4}$ " okoume plywood. The first station includes a bow thruster hatch. It's trimmed with maple and has a recessed finger pull that's offset to help align its placement.



I am no longer using Titebond's contact adhesive. Their new green friendly formula reacts with Ship'n Shore's solvents. This piece was glued with the old formula. I'm now using Weldwood with good results.



It all started last summer when I found an unfinished 15' "Catboat Project" for sale on craigslist. It was 300 miles away at the eastern end of New York State near Albany. I did not want another project of any kind to add to the others that I was finally gaining ground on but this was too good an opportunity to pass up. This hull was sitting on a roadworthy trailer and it came with a set of plans and instructions from the original designer and builder.



That builder, whose name appeared on the plans, turned out to be Mr Bradford (Brad) Story of Essex, Massachusetts. Yes, that Brad Story, and it was a Bolger design. Yes, that Phil Bolger. I was surprised to see those famous names on the plans. I was also surprised when I learned it was still for sale in November. The lovely and talented Naomi was informed of the opportunity at hand and was immediately on board and insisted we work out a deal for the boat. Or something like that.

I am currently guessing as to when this boat was originally designed and the hull building began. The original instructions were printed on a mimeograph machine which would date it back in the '70s-'80s? The original plans had an open cockpit. I found one Harbinger that was built in New Zealand and it's the only Harbinger Catboat that I can find so far with the exception of the one I just noticed on pages 6 and 7 in the February 2020 issue. That issue happened to arrive about the same time I began writing this.

I have learned that Brad Story developed a severe allergy to epoxy and had to curtail his boat building. He has since moved on to sculpture. He has created some very interesting and complex curves using sail shapes and movement that create amazing shapes and appearances that are most interesting and impressive.

I tried contacting Mr Story on his website and his daughter responded (he doesn't do much email) stating that he would be

Finishing the Brad Story Harbinger Catboat Part 1

By Greg Grundtisch

glad to answer any questions through her via email. I also contacted Susan Altenburger of Phil Bolger and Friends and ordered a set of original plans so that I can decide on what way to finish out this deck and cockpit.

The first thing I had to do after we purchased this hull was wrap it up for winter and keep it from harm. The second, as winter finally began to melt away, was to get it to the shop and inside. Seems simple enough but once the ground firmed up enough to move the boat to the shop, the door turned out to be 6'8" wide and the beam on the Harbinger was 7'2" plus the rail. OOPS! Now what?



Well, I remembered the side launch method that Harold Burnham has used replicating the way it was done back in the schooner building days on the Essex River. I tilted the hull over and raised it up on its side until it was at an angle that would roll in through the door. It took some lifting and shifting and blocking and bracing for quite a while to get it to the right position, but it worked. It only took about the same amount of time as it takes to launch a schooner.



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It's now inside with the tires and wheels removed to make it low enough to comfortably work on. Work has now begun, but minimally. I'm getting some deck panels cut and some bracing of sorts around the mast partners. Here are a couple of photos of the catboat's early work getting started with the side decks installed. The foredeck will go on after I get the mast partners glued and screwed in place and some framing for seats and storage will also be going in.



Addenda

With no work, and almost everything shut down save for medical, groceries and a few others, I'll have much more time in the shop. Just looking on the bright side of this corona virus panic, it is kinda quiet and peaceful. In Part 2 I hope to have the deck and seats in.

In late 2018 my son and I were given a unique opportunity by the Michigan-based Water Wonderland Chapter of the Antique and Classic Boat Society (ACBS) to build an 8' MiniMax hydroplane based on original plans from the early 1960s. Almost anything from that era seems to be popular again. Maybe it's nostalgia or maybe the designs of that groundbreaking decade were just ahead of their time. Either way, the MiniMax's appeal seems as relevant today as it did in 1962. We accepted the challenge without hesitation.

The youthcentric building project commenced in February 2019 at the Grand Rapids Michigan Boat Show. We were in front of a live audience and ACBS members generously donated wood and fasteners. Sons and daughters participated and even younger siblings got involved. Those initial marathon building sessions were the start of a nearly seven-month journey to complete our boats.

Joshua and I wanted this boat to last for generations and knew that the most effective defense against deterioration was to encapsulate the structure in a waterproof coating. We were both new to boat building and restoration. The volunteer advisors from ACBS, many with a lifetime of experience, suggested WEST SYSTEM® 105 Resin and 205 Fast or 206 Slow Hardener to waterproof our hydroplane.



Joshua mixing a pot of 105/206 Epoxy. Editor's note: Always wear safety glasses when working with epoxy.



A coating of neat epoxy was brushed onto the boat.

As fabrication moved forward we found many practical uses for epoxy, sealing the flotation compartments, applying fiberglass

River Hornet A MiniMax Hydroplane

By Jeffrey Carpenter
Reprinted from *Epoxyworks*
Newsletter of Gougeon Brothers

cloth to the bottom of the hull and critical seams, adding strength to the transom and ensuring that every square inch of the boat was waterproof. If you have not experienced a small hydroplane, it must be stated that you need a swimsuit and a positive attitude as you will get wet. It's all part of the fun.



After brushing the epoxy on, Joshua tipped the coat with a section of a 300 Roller Cover with a clamp for a handle.



The assembled MiniMax hydroplane with a coat of neat epoxy.

Rolling out fiberglass to reinforce the bottom of the boat.



Rolling wet epoxy onto the fiberglass reinforcement.

I have always wanted to try out the process of vinyl wrapping and decided this would be the perfect test case. We selected Edgewraps of Ashley, Michigan, and Joshua worked with the staff to design his own custom wrap. The styling is quintessentially eleven-year-old boy, lime green, blue, black and chrome with plenty of hot rod inspired flames. It's named *River Hornet*.



Joshua putting his new build through its paces.

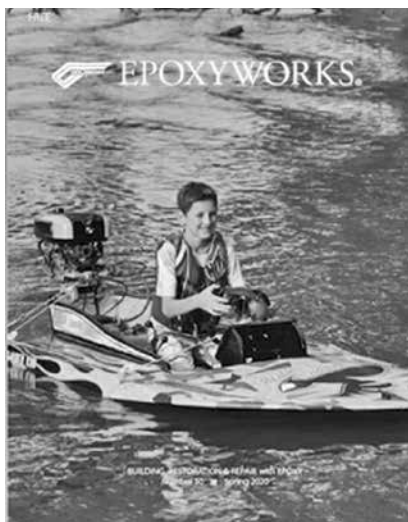
One proud kid, as well he should be.

Will this boat stand the test of time? Absolutely. The epoxy served as a perfect base for the wrapping process after wet sanding with #220 grit to ensure smooth vinyl adhesion. Under the three coats of epoxy is plenty of fiberglass reinforcement and a lot of sweat equity, perfect for a youthcentered project. Our MiniMax is rigged with period correct controls, many from Portage Bay Systems of Seattle, Washington, and a restored 1956 Sea King 12hp outboard (manufactured by the Gale division of OMC) that Joshua helped tear down and reassemble. The motor is complete with a modern safety lanyard and, yes, more lime green paint.

This project demonstrates that the next generation of inventors, fabricators and builders is ready, willing and able to learn new skills. The experience deserves to be celebrated and we hope more youth become interested in this or any similar endeavor.

In August 2019 Joshua displayed his finished hydroplane at the 42nd Annual Les Cheneaux Antique and Wooden Boat Show in Hessel, Michigan, located in Michigan's beautiful Mackinac Straits region. He represented his accomplishment alongside several other youth projects and their families sponsored by ACBS. The conversations with attendees about their own childhood boating experiences alone were worth the effort. I am proud of Joshua, he is my son after all, but I am equally as proud to have confirmed that today's youth are just as capable as ever.

Thank you for sharing in our journey and best of luck with your own inspired projects.



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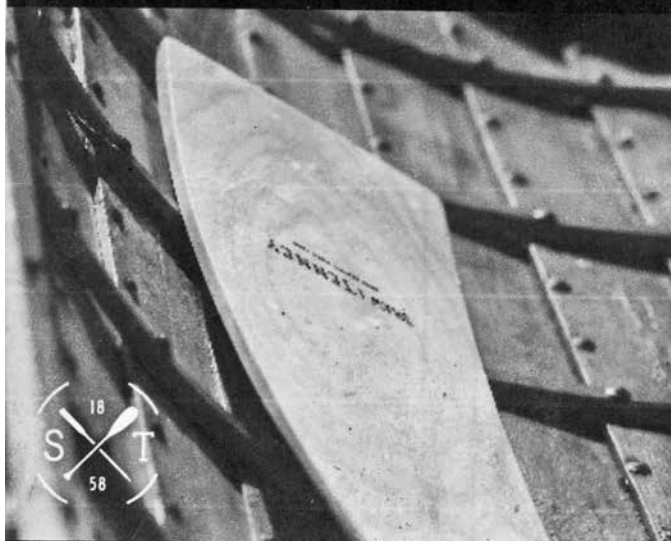
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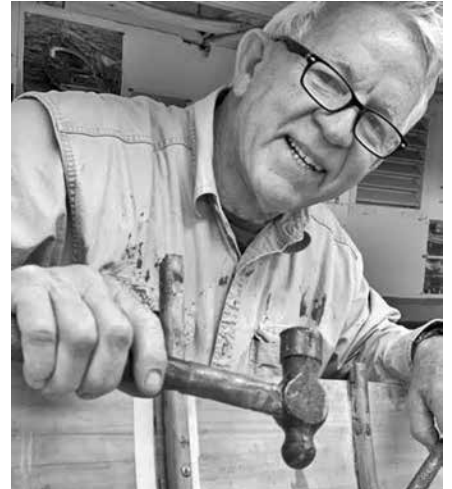
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Peapod Progress

By Richard Honan

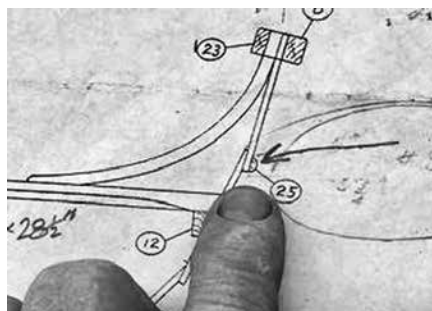
Thanks to friend Steve for his help installing the ribs in my Peapod boat building project. Fastening laminated ribs to the hull is a satisfying, labor intensive, two man job and I couldn't have done it without his help.





Yesterday I fabricated a small mahogany $\frac{3}{4}$ " half round molding and attached it to the hull, just below the gunwale or rub rail. It is more of a pleasing detail than a structural member of the hull.

I had previously made the clamps out of an old wooden sign. The hinges are actually pieces of the straps of my wife's leather Coach bag.



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Norumbega's Old Town Project

By Steve Lapey

Photos by Bob Berggren

On January 18 we got back into the restoration of the 1911 Old Town Ideal for the 2020 Assembly auction. Eight volunteers, Gary Amirault, Bob Berggren, Paul Charos, Doug Deyoe, Stuart Fall, John Fiske, Bob Gorman and Jeff Morrill, braved the cold weather and gathered at the Canoe Shop in Groveland. We milled out the new outwales from the long piece of mahogany that we scarfed together back in September. That involved planing the wood to $\frac{7}{8}$ " thick and then using a $\frac{1}{2}$ " radius roundover bit at the router table to match the profile of the original outwales. The final operation was on the table saw where the cutout for the canvas and the planking was made.

With the outwales made and set aside for another shop session, we all pitched in with sandpaper and smoothed out the filler that had been curing since the first of December, cleaned the dust off and applied a coat of Pre-Kote primer.

On January 25 the canvas was trimmed carefully at the sheer line and the new outwales were test fitted and the keel was attached.



Steve Lapey, Bob Gorman, John Fiske, Gary Amirault, Stuart Fall, Jeff Morrill and Doug Deyoe applying the Pre-Kote primer.

On February 1 we had another full house, 11 of us all squeezed into the shop first to mount the outwales, mark for screw holes before drilling on the drill press. They were then clamped in place to be secured in the center section of the hull. The ends were left loose so they could be steamed and bent to the curve of the sheer line at each end. The steaming and bending went well, nothing cracked.



Stuart Fall, Bob Gorman, Gary Amirault, Peter Doherty, Paul Charos, Steve Lapey, Paul Kelly, John Fitzgerald, Steven Hodge and Alan Svenson, ten men working on installing two outwales. This photo by Bob Berggren appeared on the front cover of the March issue of *Messing About in Boats*!

On February 8 we glued up the new outwales and got them clamped using West System epoxy glue. It took some creative clamping but it came out nice. After that we polished and drilled the new stem bands so they will be ready to install.



Creative clamping of the outwales. One cannot have too many clamps when working on canoes!

On February 15 the ends of the new outwales were sanded, clamped, drilled and screwed in place and the newly caned seats were installed.

On February 22, Gary Amirault, Paul Charos, Doug Deyoe, Peter Doherty, Stuart Fall and Bob Gorman came to sand the gun-

wales with #100, #150 and #220 sandpaper, then applied a coating of VAR Dark Mahogany stain to all surfaces. Finishing up work will include varnishing the trim, installing decals and stem bands and a final coat of dark red paint Sunday morning, clamps off and a little sanding. This canoe is almost done!



New Members for Norumbega

We have been fortunate to have several new members join our Chapter recently. Bob Berggren and Paul Charos both from Wakefield, Massachusetts, Peter Doherty from Framingham, Massachusetts, Bob Gorman from Groveland, Massachusetts, and Max Mattoon from Pittsfield, Massachusetts.

Bob Gorman has a 20' Grand Laker, he was spotted one day driving over the Groveland Bridge and your editor had to make a quick U-turn to chase him down at the local boat launch where we got into a good conversation about wooden canoes in general and Grand Lakers in particular, Bob has jumped right into Chapter activities and has been a big help on the Old Town project.

Max "Chris" Mattoon is the former owner of Berkshire Wooden Boat in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, where they were a full-time pre WWII specialized wooden boat restoration shop for almost 20 years. Now Max keeps a small restoration shop in Pittsfield where he does part time restorations for long time clients/friends.

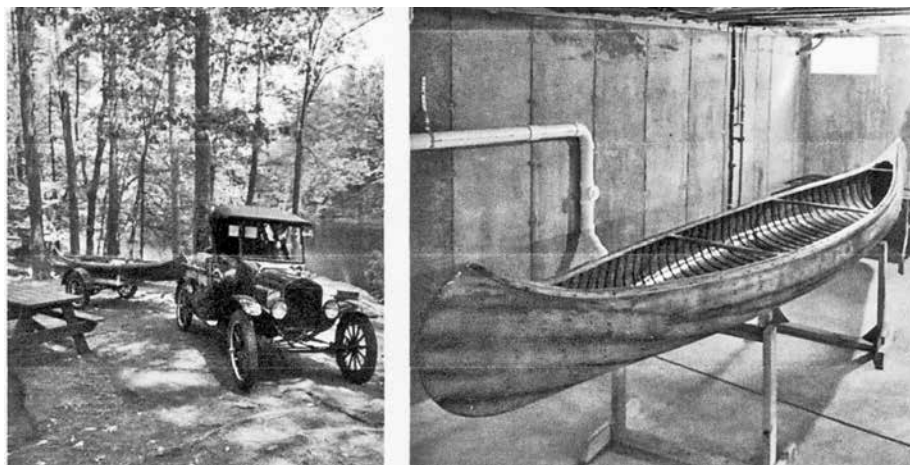
Over the years he has collected many projects, a Wiswell, Fay and Bowens, Penn Yan CZT, Beetlecats, Wianno Seniors and some canoes that he is now moving to get into. Recently he picked up an early 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ ' E.M. White that has been in the same family since 1920, bought from a Maine trapper.

Bob Berggren has an interesting collection of Old Town canoes, most of them with sponsons, and he also has a 1920 Model T Ford with an old fashioned trailer that he enjoys taking on camping adventures. In addition to collecting canoes, Bob has been to almost every session working on the Old Town project.

Peter Doherty is an active wooden canoeist from Framingham, Massachusetts, who has several canoes including one wood and canvas one. Peter has been a big help on the Ideal project.

Chris Donaldson from Lincoln, Massachusetts, and Curt Rudge from Millbury, Massachusetts, both are new to the WCHA and joined us at the winter meeting for their first Chapter event.

Paul Charos is an active canoeist with a collection of canoes, both wooden and composite. One of the wooden canoes is a 14½' "Merigold Marvel" that was built at the 1999 WCHA Assembly at Paul Smith's. He purchased it from the daughters of one of the builders of the canoe who took it home with him that year. Paul serves on the Board of Directors of the Ipswich River Watershed Association and is an active supporter of Ducks Unlimited. He, too, has been helping with the Old Town project, here are two photos of Paul's canoes.



Top left is a 1920 Old Town HW found recently in Rhode Island; top right HW dates back to 1906 and bottom right is an Old Town OTCA from 1944, a nice group of Old Towns! Bob's Model T and trailer are at bottom left.



35th Annual

small boat meet | May 1-3

2020 Cedar Key

ALWAYS the first FULL weekend in May

POTLUCK

- Sat May 2nd | 7:30pm
- Community Center
- 809 6th St. Cedar Key, FL
- \$12
- SPEAKER: Bill Fite

A generous donor has given us the gathering place again. You can expect Kenny & Rose McCain's grilled meats and sides. Bring salads, desserts, & other dishes to share. BYOB or any special drinks. Kenny provides tea & water.

For a count for Kenny & donor, please RSVP to Hugh Horton.

The meet is informal. There are no fees, no signups, no events planned on the water. Tides & weather are still the organization. May 2nd's 11:13 AM moderate high is +3.2 ft. The 4:45 PM moderate low is +1.5, giving mild currents, & sufficient water.

Shallow draft is essential—whether sail, oar, paddle, motor or engine—for the vibrant & subtle, life-filled coasts of the Cedar Keys & Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuges.

—Hugh

More information:
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 Dave Lucas | 941 704 6736 | skipjack@tampabay.rr.com
 Hugh Horton | 586 215 7060 | huhorton@gmail.com

Simon Lewandowski photo

Out Where the Piling People Are

Cusick is a little riverside burg named after a riverboat captain who had a hand in the formation of our county back a century ago. Captain Cusick was also convicted of murder and then left town after a somewhat dubious release from jail. Jamie the Seadog and I were up Cusick way in early March.

It seems that *Walkabout* and *Mr Brogans* were still attached astern *Big Red*. Sometimes it's just easier to go put a boat in the water than park it and then decide later to go launch. It had been a couple of years and a couple of boats ago that we had gone to Cusick. We normally only go this time of year.

"Our" river actually starts out over at the Continental Divide and wanders all over in a little chunk of Montana that is about as big as a standard sized state is in its entirety. Then it starts to get wider and crosses Idaho, and comes here to AlmostCanada as a full grown river, and an eccentric river at that. Yep, the Pend Oreille River takes a severe turn hereabouts to the right and heads directly up to Canada. That explains why Jamie and I had to drive north to get to Cusick. Whatever for, you ask?



They've got a launch ramp there with enough water flowing across to convince *Walkabout* to go swimming. And they've also got a lot of land with absolutely no people walking around on it this time of year, a place Jamie can go running and leave his leash in my coat pocket. We're talking BIG.

But that's not the only place we didn't have to share with anybody today. There's Canada off there someplace. Durn few people anyplace in between it would appear. We didn't really have a plan other than when we are out on a stretch of river that we see only a few years apart we normally head upstream just in case we might go bump in the night with *Miss Suzi's* whirllegig.



Soooo, we didn't see any people unless we count Piling People, hundreds of PPs. They're some kinda old, too. This river was booming back before we were naming stuffed animals after the president. These

The View from AlmostCanada by Dan Rogers

Piling People just stand around on one leg. Some of 'em lean on their siblings. They really cover this stretch of river. I only know where the ones are that stick out of the water, so we keep a pretty sharp eye out and we watch the sounder and electronic chart pretty durn close, too.



We ran upstream for half the time until it was supposed to get dark and then back downstream for the other half. That's not only how we knew when we were back to the starting point, it's also the ONLY thing we did according to a plan all day. And that, my friend, must be why you didn't join us.



Checking on Miss Kathleen

I was just out in the woods checking for fallen trees. *Miss Kathleen* has been parked out under those same trees for TWO WINTERS now. I just backed her in, stole a wheel and tire and one winter later pulled a tarp overtop. I have been dreading what that cabin was gonna look like inside, certain that a family of raccoons had sublet it out to a flock of wild turkeys or some such.



I didn't have a ladder out there and, while I was turning *MK* into our hangar queen, had stolen her A-com ladder and anchor and battery, motor and gas tank. I was pretty sure it was not going to go well when I finally clambered up and inside.

A peek on up forward didn't look too bad, not too bad at all. It does appear those raccoons have an eclectic reading list.



Apparently we exceeded the elastic limit of that duct tape patch. Those huge lockers appear to still be unmolested, frozen, thawed, frozen for certain but unless it's gooier than I think.



We might be not looking at much more than a Regular Navy Field Day. Well, maybe not much more.





And Now a Look at *Lady Bug*

I don't even remember when I put this stuff in, a big pile of $\frac{3}{4}$ " birch ply. Damn heavy stuff tossed rather unceremoniously out into *Lady Bug*'s cockpit.



Even with the axles sitting directly on the cement floor, *LB* sits pretty tall in the saddle. I gotta climb up the ladder, bump my head on the ceiling, step gingerly over the cockpit coaming, remember to hold on, don't slip and find a place to stand and crouch. All that to just get up there. No wonder I never got around to hauling all that heavy birch ply down and out. But the devastation is just sorta beginning to dawn on me.



This WAS the arrangement that held the stadium seat and filled in for the berth flat. I sorta cringed and peered down the companionway.



It would appear I meant for it to be gone. I'm wondering now just what's supposed to go back in there. All I could see were those mental etch a sketch lines running all over the place. So then I took a closer look at things.



Most of the standing and running rigging from the starboard side had already been pulled out, probably because I could stand on the ladder and reach that stuff. There's still a bunch of spars and strings over on the port side. That whole complex, jury rigged, only one like it in the world cabin top had been stripped just about clean as a whistle.



Doggone, but there was a lot of holes under that tabernacle and bi-pod mount apparatus. I think I'm getting a rough idea where all that water came from this winter over in the Slammer. But all I could find for a plan was some more of those mental etch a sketch lines running all over the place. Sure hope I can figure out what the next step is.



Making *Lady Bug* Safer for a Senior Citizen

This *Lady Bug* overhaul is gonna take scads of trips up and down the ladder. My objective is to make *LB* safer and more convenient for a senior citizen sailor, a status I still kinda hanker to become one of. There are several things that have worried me about my rig mods that somehow keep working just fine.

Most of these are there because I was headed out someplace and needed to make something work. Most of the physics was done with a wide tip marker on the back of a small matchbook cover but there's a sorta big elephant out on our foredeck. The really narrow and crowded foredeck 7' above the pavement. I have to go out there to hook things up to raise and lower the mast. Just not the best deal for a guy with two replaced knees and a

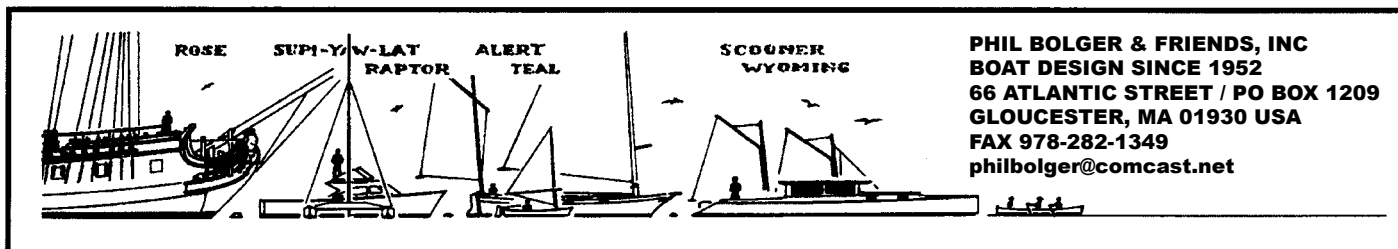


The current effort is to get things better able to be reached from inside the cabin. There were several other irons in the fire until I ran out of the proper length $\frac{5}{16}$ " hex head bolts on the first day of daylight savings time without resetting the shop clock so the hardware store had just closed. Until then I had a track on getting this piece of the pie pretty well baked.

So far I've got a new mast step platform roughed in. It's gonna move about 6"-8" forward. For the past decade the mast has had a forward rake that sent the boom up at a rather jaunty angle. Maybe this will allow for a more vertical orientation.



The new tabernacle platform is gonna be hell for stout. The underlying deck is $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick, factory stock that outdoes any 30-footer I've ever been shipmates with. I could take the compression post out and never even see a dip with the third longer mast that I hung up there. I'm working on some sort of hillbilly box beam thingie, sorta.



Phil Bolger & Friends on Design

Design Column #547 in *MAIB*

Design #530 Newfoundlander (Part 1)

29'0"x8'3"x3'6" 408sf (+130sf) x 9,300lbs
 Long Keel Catboat

Recently we heard from one of Phil's clients from the early 1990s who suggested revisiting this design this many years later. It seems that the last time (and first time) Design #530 was discussed in *MAIB* was in the Vol 9, No 8, September 1, 1991 issue. This was one of those highly compressed everything on one page formats Phil and Bob had cultivated when *MAIB* came out every two weeks and thus was about half the page count per issue. Then Phil referred to her as "Charlie's Catboat." Several years later she reappeared in Phil's 1994 *Boats With An Open Mind (BWOM)*, with #530 now referred to as "Newfoundlander," discussed as Chapter 32 on page 161, out of 75 design discussion chapters across 420 pages.

Since both sources are from a while back, best thing to do is to refresh our memory by

simply quoting Phil's words straight out of that *MAIB* issue and then his *BWOM* Chapter 32.

MAIB in 1991: "This keel catboat is being built by Vokey Shipyard in Trinity, Newfoundland, for Charlie Ballou of Wilmington, Massachusetts, for summer cruising, often single handed, around the Bay of Exploits on the north coast of Newfoundland.

She's carvel planked on sawn frames in the usual fashion of that locality. The owner had the make and break Atlantic engine and it seemed appropriate, but before she was finished he decided that for singlehanded a direct reversing engine so far from the helm wasn't a good idea and swapped it for a modern diesel.

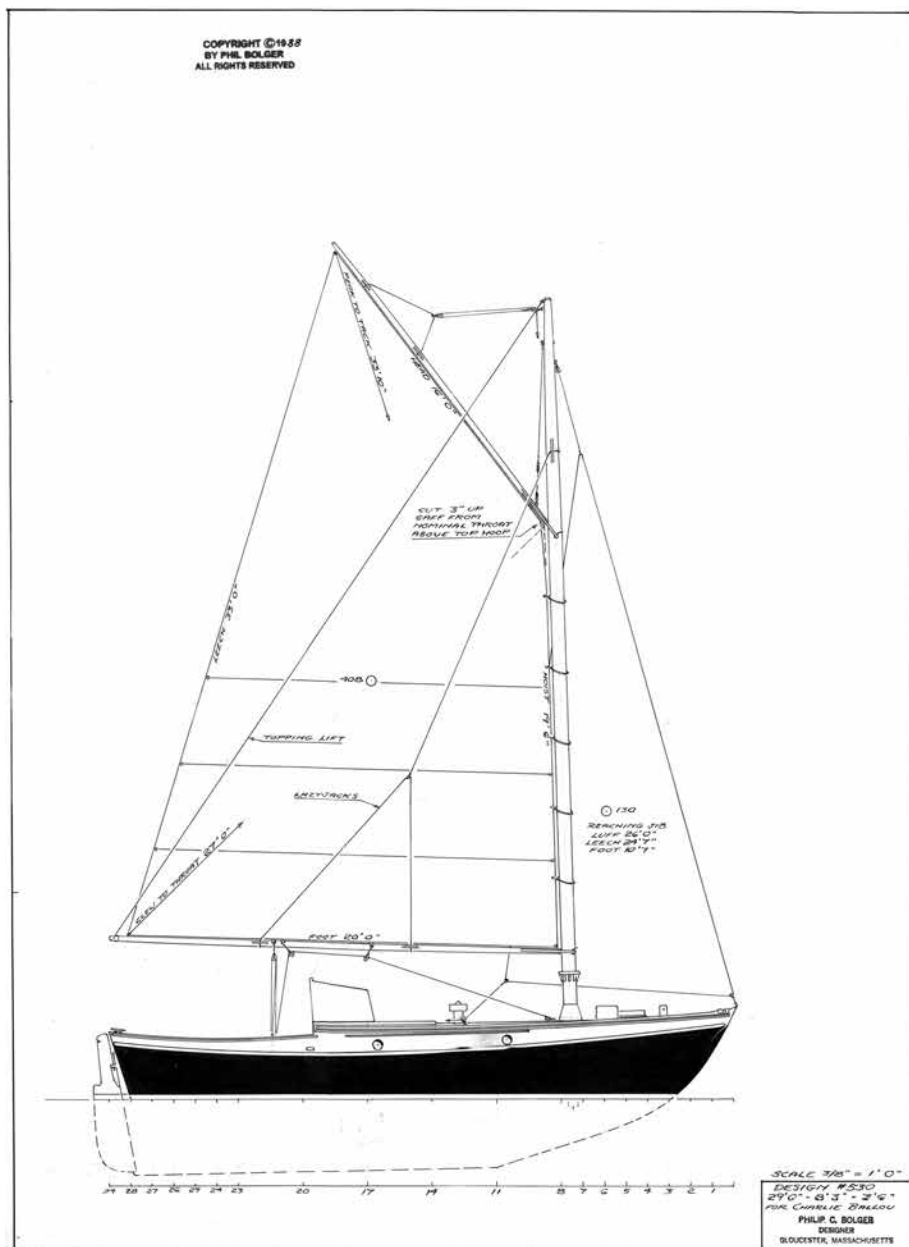
These cat rigged boats with hulls stretched out well ahead of the mast and abaft the end of the boom have none of the vices of the usual short catboat and they gain in simplicity of gear and reduced stresses compared with sloops and other rigs."

BWOM in 1994: "Charlie Ballou spends his summers on the Bay of Exploits on the northern coast of Newfoundland. This is supposed to be the land the Vikings called Vineland the Good, but they saw it in a stretch of global warming and they came to it from Greenland by way of Baffin Island. It looks harsh now, jutting rocks and dark forest facing the Labrador Sea. The bay is full of wooded islands and isolated coves, demanding a different order of vigilance from that of the crowds of Megalopolis.

Vokey Shipyard in Trinity, Newfoundland, built her in between commercial fishing boats. She was designed for the usual Newfoundland construction, nail fastened carvel planking on sawn frames. Charlie shipped in the ballast casting, some of her timber and most of her equipment. He already had the make and break Lunenburg built engine shown on the drawing. It seemed very appropriate but we couldn't work out a good enough way for a single hander to deal with a direct reversing engine so far from the helm. He swapped it for a Volvo diesel before she was finished.

He kept the coal range, also from Lunenburg. One like it has kept me warm and fed for most of nine years. I'm fond of it and proud of having learned to make it carry a fire for up to 20 hours without attention, but I guess the 19th century technology is about finished. Anthracite coal isn't as easy to find as it was and diesel stoves are much better than they used to be.

The raised deck hull is for simplicity and for ability to sail through a squall without burying herself. The long, deep keel, heavy outside ballast and powerful hard bilged shape are for ability to weather the evil lee shores. The forefoot is cut back to turn sharply among the islets of the bay, but the keel is carried back to a gently raked rudder



to make sure she can be kept on course, running off in a bad chance.

The tall gaff cat rig obviates standing rigging with a tree for a mast, knots and all, one sheet for quick reaction single handing. The vices of the cat rig don't appear in a boat long enough to build a long bow out ahead of the mast and to keep the boom inboard of the stern. One mast is much lighter than two. A jib would add driving power but would demand wire standing rigging with high wind resistance and much more stress on the nail fastened hull."

To summarize Charlie Ballou's and Phil's priorities, certain design attributes are worthwhile reflecting upon:

The long keel option for a catboat, not unheard of but uncommon with just a few in Phil's Archives.

A lot of bow length ahead of the mast.

Plain tree for a mast, not uncommon in catboats.

A typical catboat free standing unstayed mast, despite plenty of room around it that could support a leaner and thus lighter stick with a conventional triangular standing rig geometry.

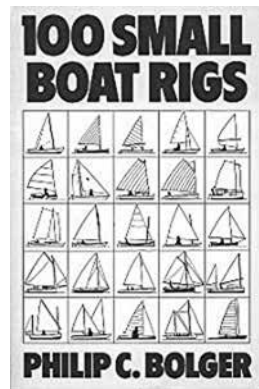
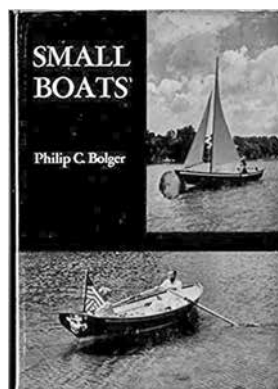
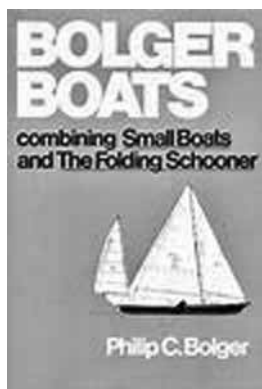
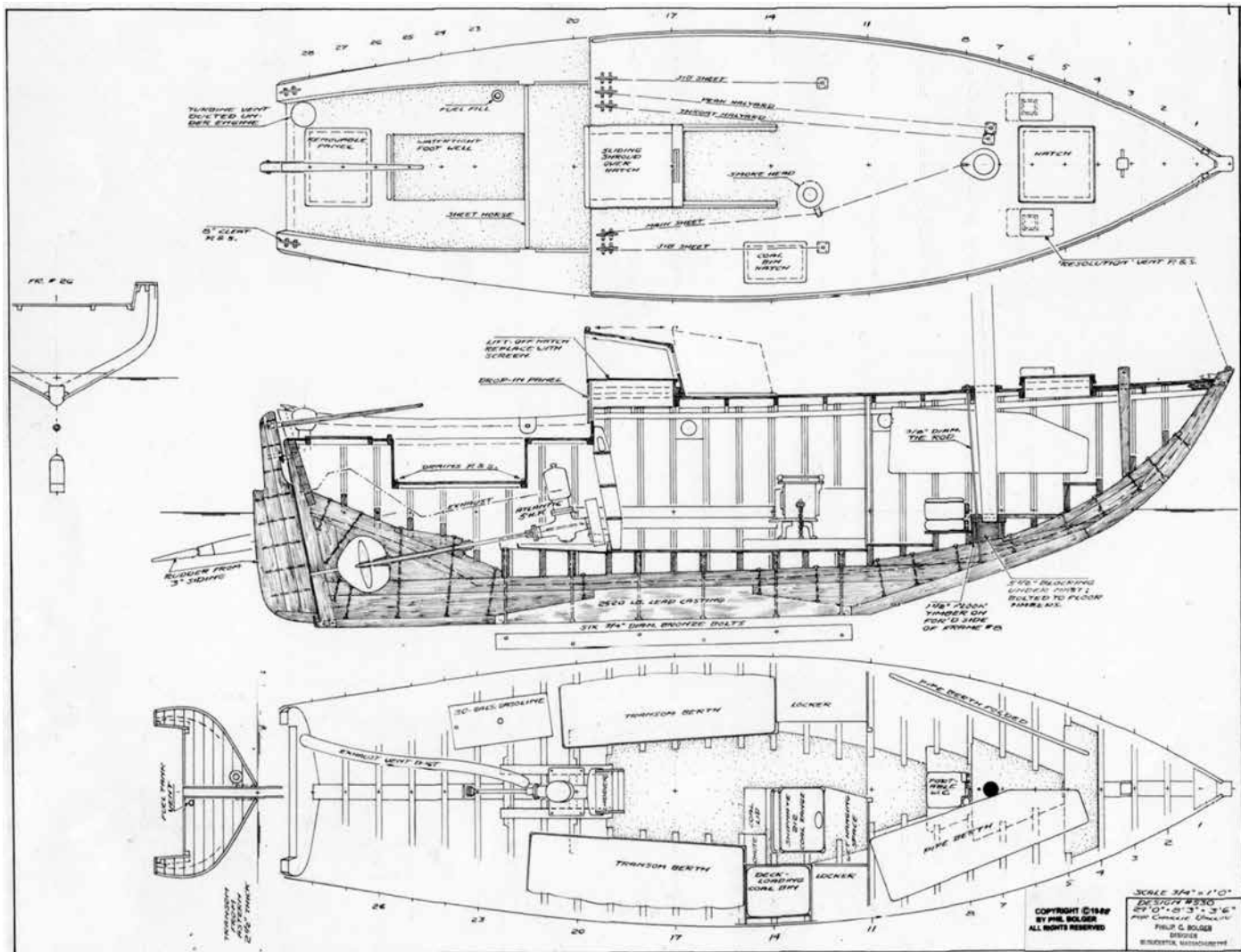
Just an optional reaching-jib.

No tabernacle that would allow lowering the mast.

Plain workboat standard wooden construction in a yard constantly doing this work, meaning not a contemplative wood-grain culturally enlightened "Lifestyle Expression" venture adding up the billable hours we may find today in some yards, all this on a finely sculpted hull shape we'll dis-

cuss in the next issue, and to be built, as it happened, mostly of Massachusetts sourced black locust. From some perspectives an unexpected design, except that Charlie and Phil agreed on her.

Apparently just a minor fly in the ointment for Ballou, the Vokey Shipyard in Trinity, Newfoundland, is well over 930 land miles ENE from Wilmington, Massachusetts, as the seagull flies, with land, border, more land, sea, islands, sea and finally the full west to east width of Newfoundland to get to that boatshed on the island's eastern shores, in possibly one of the easternmost communities in Canada. A geography lesson for some and Charlie Ballou's choice to get his yacht built. More on her in the next issue.



News from the Inland Sea

By Rob Ecker
robecker@charter.net

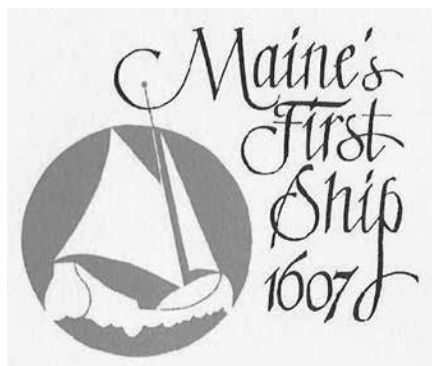
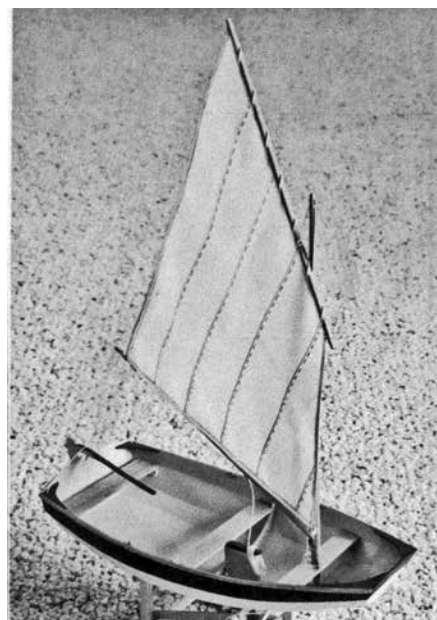
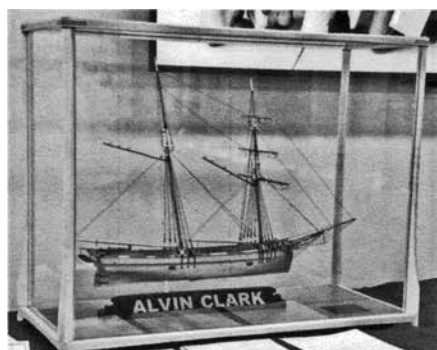
My last correspondence with *MAIB* regarded my modeling of the Mystery Ship *Alvin Clark*, a topmast schooner from 1846 that was found and retrieved from Green Bay in 1968-69. I've completed that model and am on to modeling a 9'6" Joel White Nutshell Pram. I'm building it to a 1"=1' scale and plan to build a full scale version before summer.

In earlier articles about modeling I've suggested modeling first, full scale after. I'm following my advice and already see advantages. For modelers, the 44th Annual Midwest Model Ship & Boat Contest will be held May 15-17 at the Wisconsin Maritime Museum in Manitowoc, Wisconsin.

An update related to the *Alvin Clark* is the 2018-19 discovery of the *W.C. Kimball*, an 1888 Great Lakes schooner built in Manitowoc. It is more intact than the *Alvin Clark* and can be viewed on YouTube under that name. It is unbelievable footage.

Lastly is this request for information on behalf of a fellow modeler and boatnerd. He is seeking plans for the 1950 era dinghy called the Peanut that was designed by Arnold R. Johnson from West Islip, New York. If any reader has information or plans please contact: Jeffery Moses, (319) 530-9967 or jmoses@southslope.net.

Thank you and your contributors for your continued positive results.



Virginia's Launching Delayed

Maine's First Ship regrettably announces that we are postponing the planned June 7 launch of *Virginia*. While construction is on schedule for the June launch, "the obstacle we're facing is the lack of a wharf for outfitting at our building site in downtown Bath," said MFS President Orman Hines. "She will need a place to tie up in the Kennebec once she is in the water." MFS was hoping to use one of several existing facilities nearby "but we were unable to secure permission. We are now faced with raising additional funds and securing multiple permits so we can build our own." Once the permits are approved, volunteers can build the wharf quickly, said Hines.

Fast changing economic conditions across the globe due to Covid-19 may also negatively affect the fundraising efforts needed to complete *Virginia*. We hope for an early October launch.

Volunteers are still working hard two days a week. They are finishing up the deck, starting to work on the bulwarks and building an engine bed. In addition, six pieces of external lead keel ballast at 3,000lbs apiece



The deck nearly finished.

have arrived and they've begun to hang the lead keel. The sails have also been delivered, and the rigging team hopes to bend one on a yard as a display in the Freight Shed.



Building a watertight bulkhead.



President Orman Hines with *Virginia*'s new sails and unloading one of six pieces of lead keel, each weighing 3,000lbs, to make up the exterior ballast.



You have safely towed your boat to the marina and have it loaded and ready for use. Now comes the task of backing the trailer down the ramp to launch the boat. For some people, backing a trailer is an activity fraught with anxiety. For others, it is a simple task. You can see both at any public boat ramp. No matter what you have read in various magazines covering "backing trailer tips," nothing beats practice. I learned to back both short and long trailers using both the inside and outside mirrors. Once I had enough practice, the outside mirrors were the way to go.

The distance between the hitch and the trailer axle(s) also makes a difference in how the trailer behaves. I found backing 25' of boat on a double axle trailer a lot easier than 16' of boat on single axle trailer I had at one point. I learned to drive a stick shift in an abandoned subdivision (developer had gone bankrupt) with shell streets and curbs (the sidewalk was buried in the overgrowth). Let out the clutch while feeding the gas, jerk, jerk, stall. Try again. With time and practice I got the combination ("feel") down.

Then it was time to learn to back a trailer. Back to the subdivision and its empty streets. Much practice of straight back as well as around a corner and all was well. By that I mean that I would drive through an intersection and then back the trailer to the left into the adjoining street. Once it was straight back, I would pull forward and then back to the right into the adjoining street. I continued this routine until I did not have a problem backing around a corner in either direction.

I even learned to put one foot on the clutch and brake pedals with the other foot on the gas pedal while pulling up a ramp with boat trailer attached. Using the parking brake to hold the car and trailer while letting out the clutch was easier but my father insisted I learn the other method also. With his experience as a one time semi trailer truck driver, he also taught me how to use the mirrors to control the trailer when backing up.



From the Lee Rail

By C. Henry Depew

These days, finding an abandoned subdivision to use its streets for backing practice is a bit difficult. However, many shopping malls have some area that is not being used and the white lines designating parking spaces make things much easier. The idea is to set yourself up to back the trailer into the empty parking space with a white line on each side of the trailer's wheels when done. With plenty of room to practice you will get very good at the activity and feel more comfortable at the public launch ramp.

Also of use is a person standing near the back of the trailer to give you hand signals if needed. Some practice and coordination with this person also helps. If all else fails you can do what one person did. He attached a hitch to the front of his truck. When he was ready to launch/recover the boat, he attached the trailer to the hitch on the front of his vehicle. He then had good visibility of what was going on and the drive wheels were well up from the water line (which helped on slick ramps).

"Do it yourself" (DIY) projects abound on a boat (and elsewhere). Knowing when to DIY and not to is important. The flushing handle on one of our home commodes was weeping. The fix was either to pull things apart and replace the washer or lower the water level in the holding tank. Lowering the water level was straightforward and easy to

do. Thus, the water level was lowered and the drip of water into the cup we had placed under the handle ceased.

Another seep in the house plumbing at the kitchen required shutting off the water to the house, removing the leaking (but no longer used) fitting attached to the cold water side of the kitchen faucet and removing the resulting hole with a new piece of pipe. There was also the replacement of the kitchen faucet which was leaking slightly around the base. I knew what to do and how to do it and had the tools, but I called in a plumber because if something goes wrong the plumber would be there to take care of things. It was a good thing I called in the plumber as the 50-year-old fittings did not want to disconnect. Although the piping to the kitchen was easy to fix, he had to cut the faucet hold down bolts as the nuts would no longer turn.

I keep reading articles about securing your home from hackers. It seems that the new "smart lamps" can provide a hacker access to your home if you do not take precautions to protect your home's wifi system. Thus the question, how well is your boat's wifi system protected? Do you have the standard encryption that came with the devices or have you had an expert come in and upgrade your system's security? If you have some of the wifi devices installed on your boat, you might want to look into this matter.

At one point in my computer career I was responsible for my department's micro computer security. Our computer virus problems came in from the outside via staff members bringing in a home infected disk and sticking it into his/her microcomputer at work. Since it was a DOS virus and the internal LAN was Unix, the virus did not get beyond the infected machine and was easy to identify and remove. I was no longer involved in computer related activities when the wifi became the replacement for the hard-wire LAN I had worked with, for which I was extremely grateful.



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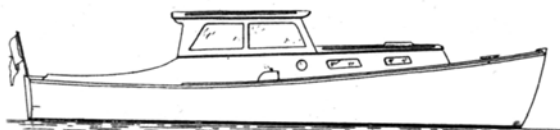
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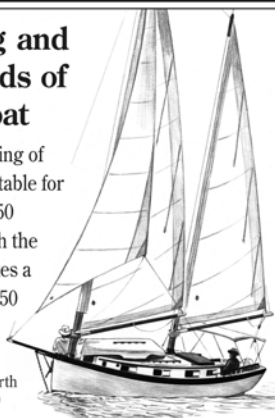
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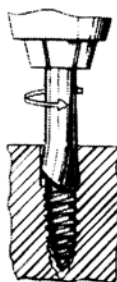
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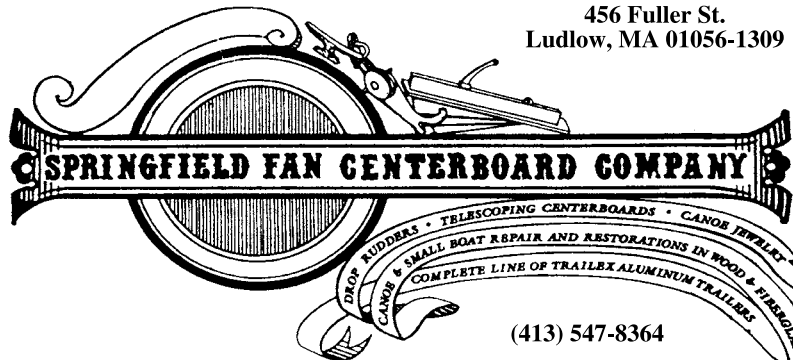
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